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ABSTRACT

This publication describes the experiences of nine British colleges in developing and implementing their own models of caseloading and workloading. It begins with an executive summary (Sue Carroll) and "Introduction" (Sue Carroll) that discusses workloading, caseloading, and hybrids that incorporate elements from both. Part I on workloading consists of chapters 1-3: "Weighted Workloading" (Pauline Wilcox) focuses on the weighted workload system at Lowestoft College; "Type 1 and Type 2 Activities" (David Ellerby) describes the model at Harlow College; and "Relative Workloading: A Formulaic Approach" (Ed Sallis) focuses on a research exercise into caseloading at Brunel College that was later abandoned. Part II on caseloading contains chapters 4-7: "A Pilot Study" (Jennifer Sims) offers a detailed account of a caseloading system at Accrington and Rossendale College, including aims, essential elements, operation, implementation, effects, and efficiency and productivity; "Notional Contact" (James Hampton) describes operation and effects of a caseloading system at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education; "Workloading to Caseloading--A Resource-Based Approach" (Ed Sallis) continues the discussion begun in chapter 3 as Brunel College considered a "bottom-up" approach; and "An Exploration of Caseloading" (Pru Taylour) focuses on development at South Bristol College. The three chapters in part III describe hybrids: "A Compensatory Time Model" (Yvonne Griffiths) focuses on the Northbrook College of Design and Technology model of caseloading; "The Professional Portfolio" (Ivor Hixon) discusses a system for teachers to establish client-partnership relationships with students at Blackpool and the Fylde College; and "The Danish Family System" (Torben Jessen) tells about a system for allocating staff time that is being developed and implemented in Aabenraa Business College in Denmark. (YLB)

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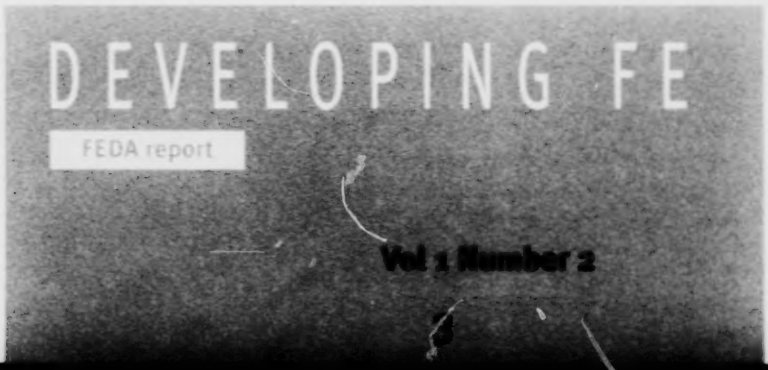

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Executive summary

Sue Carroll

1. Caseloading has been the focus of considerable interest in FE since the incorporation of colleges in 1993. FE managers are striving to find new systems for deploying and accounting for the human resource represented by academic staff, to ensure maximum flexibility and productivity.

2. Factors encouraging colleges to find a new approach to staffing and the internal allocation of resources include: the pressures to expand and bring down costs; the introduction of new contracts for academic staff; the establishment of a funding methodology which supports a flexible, learner-centred curriculum; and the embedding of GNVQs and NVQs.

3. College managers are interested in the concept of caseloading because they hope it will fulfil a number of different purposes:

- ease the introduction of new staff contracts by providing a mechanism for ensuring balanced individual workloads,

based on the recognition of the full range of activities carried out by lecturers, in addition to direct class contact

- enable staff to deliver a flexible, student-centred curriculum
- provide a mechanism for standardising staff workloads across the college, in place of the long-established customs of different departments and sections
- produce a direct relationship between the operational imperatives of the college and the work of each lecturer, by using the FEFC funding methodology as the mechanism for delegating budgets to teams or setting target FEFC units for individuals to deliver
- shift from a system based on inputs, as represented by staff timetables, to one based on outputs, e.g. the achievement of targets for enrolments and achievements
- empower staff as professionals, responsible for managing the learning of a caseload of students
- establish a culture of empowerment, autonomy and self regulation in place of control, regulation and specification and in so doing, increase student achievements and obtain better use of staff, accommodation and equipment

4. Caseloading is a portmanteau term, used to refer to two different strands of development: *workloading* and *caseloading*. Inevitably, there is a degree of over simplification in such a categorisation, but it may help to clarify thinking during the current period of experimentation. The term 'caseloading' is widely used without distinguishing between the two strands of development.

5. The predominant aim of *workloading* is to obtain a means of ensuring balanced individual workloads. This is achieved through the formal recognition of all the various activities carried out by lecturers, not just class contact. The various activities are categorised and time allocations for each are set out. This approach involves the development of

weightings and formulae and usually operates by calculating discounts from class contact.

6. In caseloading, members of staff, as teams or individuals, are given responsibility for managing caseloads of students with resources that they themselves generate. It is up to them to decide how resources, including staffing, will be deployed provided their targets in terms of recruitment, retention, achievement and the generation of income, are met.

7. Colleges' aims for caseloading or workloading are likely to be reflected in the type of model they adopt.

8. Some colleges operate models incorporating elements from both caseloading and workloading. It may be argued that workloading is a transitionary stage on the way to caseloading. Or it may be that both caseloading and workloading are steps toward a system using aspects of each.

9. Both workloading and caseloading are in the early stages of development. While many colleges have demonstrated their interest in the concept, relatively few have yet gone further than limited pilots. In most colleges the introduction of 'caseloading' has been associated with the introduction of new contracts, with the result that developments have been comparatively tentative and patchy in their impact. Some colleges, however, are already in their second year of implementation.

10. Colleges have long been used to staff timetables and class contact as the means of allocating and accounting for staff time. Letting go of these feels both exciting and risky for managers and staff.

11. As time progresses it will be possible to discern more clearly how effective the various models are. We need to see what happens when the systems are extended to whole colleges and both staff and managers are experienced in their use. Meanwhile, it is already possible to get a sense of which features seem to be working and which to avoid.

12. This publication describes the experiences of nine colleges in developing and implementing their own models of caseloading and workloading.

13. Two of the colleges, Accrington and Rossendale, and Northbrook, took part in a FEDA project to evaluate their models in terms of their effect on: curriculum delivery; staff attitudes and motivation; productivity and efficiency. The experiences of these two colleges are therefore described in more detail.

Introduction

Sue Carroll

Caseloading has been the focus of considerable interest in the FE sector since the incorporation of colleges. It is probably no coincidence that 'staff are an organisation's most valuable resource' has achieved cliché status in the same period. A number of factors in the current FE environment are driving managers to seek new systems for deploying and accounting for the human resource represented by academic staff, to ensure that maximum flexibility and productivity are obtained. With the introduction of new staff contracts, the establishment of the FEFC funding system and the embedding of outcomes-based qualifications (NVQs and GNVQs) in the FE curriculum, caseloading seems to offer a possible way forward. Caseloading, however, is a portmanteau term, used to describe two different strands of developments and these are outlined below.

Since 1974, academic staff workloads in FE have been based on the number of hours spent with a class, with an additional commitment to

preparation and administration, totalling 30 hours per week. A lecturer grade 1 would typically teach for approximately 21 hours per week. Promotion to more senior posts brought with it a reduction in class contact hours, in recognition of increased administrative and managerial responsibilities. Work was graded, with reduced class contact hours and higher rates of pay for higher level teaching, as determined by the target qualification of the students. The varying demands of teaching different kinds or numbers of students were not taken into account. The 1988 NJC agreement, however, included non-teaching activities, such as marketing and curriculum development, in the definition of a lecturer's duties.

The new freedoms and responsibilities of incorporation, the pressures to expand and drive down costs, the introduction of a funding methodology which supports a flexible, learner-centred curriculum model, all call for a new approach to staffing and the internal allocation of resources.

Caseloading seems to offer college managers a means of addressing a range of objectives:

- easing the introduction of new staff contracts, by allaying staff fears that they may be asked to take on unreasonable teaching loads. The recognition of the full range of a lecturer's duties, and the use of weightings for different kinds of activities, provide mechanisms for ensuring that staff have reasonable workloads
- recognising the full range of activities which need to be undertaken in today's colleges, in addition to conventional teaching; to highlight these and encourage staff to undertake a wider repertoire of activities
- enabling staff to deliver a flexible, student-centred curriculum, e.g. to support students on individualised unit-based programmes; to provide assessment services; to support and assess students in Realistic Work Environments;

- to provide additional support for students with learning difficulties or disabilities

- exploiting the potential of the FEFC funding methodology for flexibility and the focus on the individual student rather than the course, e.g. tri-annual accounting periods allowing year-round starts; additional studies leading to additional achievement units; incentives for enabling students to 'fast track' toward qualifications; full funding for the APL route; additional support for students who require it
- providing a mechanism for standardising staff workloads across the college, in place of the long-established customs and traditions of different departments and sections
- producing a direct relationship between the operational imperatives of the college and the work of each individual lecturer, by using the FEFC funding methodology as the mechanism for delegating budgets to teams or setting target FEFC units for individuals to deliver; to produce a direct and explicit relationship between the work of each member of staff, the recruitment, retention and achievements of students, and the financial position of the college and programme area
- shifting from a system based on inputs, as represented by staff timetables, to one based on outputs, e.g. achievement of targets for enrolments and achievements. Staff themselves are responsible for deciding how to deploy their time to best effect, in order to manage the learning of their students and deliver a target number of FEFC units
- empowering staff as professionals, responsible for managing the learning of a caseload of students, by giving them the necessary autonomy to apply their professional expertise for the benefit of the 'client', e.g. control of resources; self direction and regulation within agreed frameworks

- finding a new system for deploying and accounting for staff time which is not based on control, regulation and specification, but on empowerment, autonomy, self regulation. This usually involves delegating responsibility for resources to the point of delivery, e.g. staff decide on the flexible deployment of their own time in place of fixed timetables
- obtaining better utilisation of resources, staffing, accommodation and equipment

Within the caseloading portmanteau, two distinct and divergent channels of development are emerging. In seeking to find alternatives to the Silver Book and the class contact hour, and depending on the relative emphases placed on the various objectives listed above, colleges are going down two distinct pathways. These can be roughly differentiated as *workloading* and *caseloading*, as outlined below. Obviously there is a degree of oversimplification in such a categorisation. Some colleges are combining elements from the two pathways and there is some overlap between them. Nevertheless, this rough distinction between two emerging strands of development may help to clarify thinking during the current period of experimentation.

Workloading

The predominant aim of workloading is to obtain a means of ensuring balanced individual workloads. This is achieved through the formal recognition of all the various activities carried out by lecturers, not only 'class contact'. The various activities are categorised and time allocations for each activity set out. Different colleges are using different categories, but most include factors such as: numbers of students; the relative demands of teaching different kinds of students; the volume and style of assessment; the style of teaching and learning; the demands of different subjects; categories of non-teaching activities. Workloading involves

developing weightings and formulae and calculating discounts, credits or 'compensatory time' from class contact.

Some people argue that this approach has a number of drawbacks:

- the focus is still on class-contact time and does not therefore provide an alternative to the Silver Book
- it appears to be complex and bureaucratic, involving the development, acceptance and application of complicated weightings and formulae (although this may not be so in practice, especially once the system is established)
- instead of empowering lecturers to manage the learning of their students, it provides a more detailed and specified control mechanism

Others suggest that workloading is a transitionary stage on the way to caseloading. By focusing attention on a more rounded definition of the activities which can be carried out by lecturers, workloading may provide a means of moving away from the Silver Book. Moreover, by setting out and recognising these various activities, teachers may be encouraged to use a wider repertoire of teaching and learning styles, thereby raising the quality of teaching and learning. Allocating time for categories of non-teaching activities is also likely to improve quality. For example, allocating time for internal verification is likely to enhance the consistency and rigour of NVQ and GNVQ assessment.

Caseloading

Staff are given responsibility for managing caseloads of students within the envelope of resources that they themselves are generating. The responsibility may be allocated to *teams* of staff, as at Accrington and Rossendale and Brunel Colleges, or to staff as *individuals*, as at Blackpool and the Fylde College. It is up to the team , or individual, to decide how these resources will be deployed (e.g. what form of support is provided for students, when and how much), provided that targets, in terms of

recruitment, retention, achievements and the generation of income, are met. A close fit between the work of staff, the progress of students and the college budget is achieved through the internal use of the FEFC funding methodology, i.e. individuals or teams are responsible for earning and deploying target FEFC units. This is a more radical model than workloading, because staff and student timetables are no longer seen as the business of managers. It is up to staff to use their professional judgement to determine students' learning programmes. The role of managers is to *support* and *guide* staff in managing the learning of their students.

Sceptics argue that while this approach may work very successfully in practical subjects (e.g. NVQs) and where staff work in self-contained teams with a minimum of servicing, there may be difficulties in applying the model to other areas of the curriculum or college. It may also take time for middle managers to learn how best to use the flexibility at their disposal.

Hybrid

Some colleges are operating models which incorporate elements from both caseloading and workloading. For example, in seeking to operate a caseloading model based on individual responsibility for generating target FEFC units, Blackpool and the Fylde College is also using ratios and weightings to differentiate between different kinds of activities. These formulae are not, however, based on time, but on School Units of Resource, derived from FEFC units. At Bournemouth and Poole College, a caseloading system is based on 'notional contact' which means that instead of having fixed timetables, staff are responsible for deploying their own time to provide flexible support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The perception in some quarters that workloading is a transitionary stage on the way to caseloading could be inaccurate. It may be that both

workloading and caseloading are steps towards a system which borrows aspects from each.

Both workloading and caseloading are in the early stages of development, and the term 'caseloading' is widely used without distinguishing between the two strands of development. While many colleges have demonstrated their interest in the concept, few have yet gone further than a limited pilot involving a small number of individuals or teams, in particular areas of the curriculum. In most colleges, the introduction of caseloading has been associated with the introduction of new contracts with the result that developments have been relatively tentative and the effects patchy. Some colleges, however, are already in their second year of implementation.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the introduction of a system which is not driven by timetables, controlled by managers, generates a considerable sense of risk among both managers and staff. The pioneering nature of the work, at a time of considerable insecurity and change in the sector, is illustrated by a reported tendency among caseloaded (as distinct from workloaded) staff to worry about not being able to prove that they are 'up to hours'. They are anxious that the system could suddenly revert to class contact as a measure of inputs, leaving them unable to account for their time and hence justify their continued employment. The more radical outputs-based system has yet to establish itself firmly in the FE culture. Moreover, once resources are devolved to teams with the autonomy to decide how targets will be achieved, some managers are likely to be anxious about the continuing necessity for their own roles.

Some colleges are introducing caseloading systems based on the delivery of target numbers of FEFC units by teams or individuals. Although it is difficult to predict the precise effect on different curriculum areas of moving from an internal resource allocation system based on historical budgets or full-time equivalents (FTEs) to one based

1995-6 Budget options in £000s

	Historical budget	Tariff budget	FTE budget
Income			
FEFC grant	11,088	11,088	11,088
Educational contracts	2,338	2,338	2,338
Tuition fees	648	648	648
Other grant income	24	24	24
Total income	14,388	14,388	14,388
Expenditure			
Faculty A			
— school 1	2,150	2,346	1,486
— school 2	1,375	1,473	1,321
— school 3	750	1,115	1,048
Total faculty A	4,275	4,934	3,855
Faculty B			
— school 4	445	678	1,089
— school 5	755	1,006	1,095
— school 6	1,785	1,521	1,103
Total faculty B	2,985	3,205	3,287
Total academic	7,260	8,140	7,142
Finance	1,980	1,732	1,980
Estates	2,750	2,405	2,750
Administration	1,650	1,443	1,650
Personnel	640	560	640
Total support	7,020	6,140	7,020
Total expenditure	14,280	14,280	14,162
Surplus/deficit information	108	108	226

Table 1. Different approaches to calculating the college budget result in some marked differences in profiles of expenditure, especially when compared with historical resource allocations. Any period of transition will need to be carefully managed.

on FEFC units, it is important to anticipate the changes as far as possible so that the transition can be managed.

The outcomes of one college's rough calculations and comparisons are shown in Table 1. The different approaches to calculating the college budget result in some marked differences in the profiles of expenditure,

especially when compared with historical resource allocations. Bringing home to staff the realities of the FEFC funding methodology is doubtless worthwhile. However, it may also be important to protect some areas of provision by means of cross subsidy or to provide a buffer during any period of transition.

This publication describes the experiences of nine colleges in developing and, in most cases, implementing their own models of caseloading and workloading. Two of the colleges, Accrington and Rossendale and Northbrook College, took part in the FEDA project to evaluate their models in terms of their impact on curriculum delivery; staff attitudes and motivation; and productivity and efficiency. The experiences of these two colleges are therefore described in more detail. The ten case studies presented here complement and extend those already published by the CEF. As time progresses, it will be possible to discern more clearly how effectively these models are operating in practice. We need to see what happens when the systems are extended to whole colleges, and when both staff and managers are experienced in using them. Meanwhile, it is possible to get a sense of which features seem to be working and which to avoid.

We are grateful to these pioneering colleges for sharing the lessons they have learned so far, for the benefit of the sector.

Part I

Workloading

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Chapter 1

Weighted workloading

Pauline Wilcox

Lowestoft College

Background

Lowestoft College is a medium-sized college set at the most eastern point of the UK. A weighted workloading system was developed and introduced at a time of considerable change at the college. The new principal was negotiating a payback agreement with the county council, concerning a substantial inherited deficit. The college had not met its enrolment targets in 1993-4 and had a relatively high ALF. Moreover there was a tradition of high levels of abatement from teaching duties.

Like other colleges, Lowestoft was seeking to introduce new contracts for staff. The introduction of new contracts for lecturing staff was closely linked to a review of curriculum delivery throughout the college. This review process involved consultation and discussion between lecturing and management staff throughout the college concerning:

- the nature of the college curriculum offer and mission statement
- the role of lecturing staff in developing, supporting and delivering the curriculum
- the role of management staff in directing and developing the college mission
- the role of support (non-teaching) staff in supporting the delivery of the college curriculum

As a result of these discussions, several factors emerged:

- the role of the lecturer was not, and never has been, restricted to the delivery of teaching sessions to groups of students
- the full role of the lecturer was not carried out within the hours and weeks specified in the Silver Book contract
- lecturing staff were engaged in a number of tasks which were just as important as 'formal' teaching to the delivery of the curriculum, including curriculum development, staff development and academic research, marketing courses, developing new business, co-ordinating and supporting programmes of study
- activities outside normal teaching duties, although mentioned in the Silver Book, were not formally recognised or accounted for under this contract

It became clear that guidelines should be provided alongside the introduction of new contracts. These would recognise all aspects of the lecturer's role and promote discussion between managers and lecturing staff on how that role might be carried out most effectively.

As a result, the weighted workload system emerged. This was a developmental move to support the flexibility which the college was seeking to offer, and to recognise the full contribution which lecturing staff made to the college's work.

2.1

Operation

The weighting system was designed to recognise that some tasks are more time-consuming and complex than others so that weightings for various tasks vary accordingly. Activities are divided into three categories:

- pedagogic duties
- student activities
- support activities

These activities are weighted as shown in Table 1.1.

Draft weightings were originally devised by programme centre managers – the line managers who would be responsible for agreeing the workloads of their staff. An open consultation was conducted with teaching staff, who were invited to talk to the Assistant Principal (Organisational Development) about the implications of the scheme. A small but varied sample of staff took up the offer. Dummy runs were conducted using the draft weightings.

The weighted workload scheme was introduced in association with new staff contracts and is currently operating only with staff who are on new contracts. The scheme is not included within the contract itself, but within the associated management guidelines.

The aim is to introduce a system which, while straightforward and clear in its general applications, allows particular workloads to arise from close discussion between individual lecturing staff and their curriculum managers. Moreover, while recognising that individual members of staff might have particular strengths and preferences and their workloads might reflect this, the college favours an approach to staff workloads which promotes variety in a lecturer's responsibilities and which encourages a flexible and multi-skilled workforce. Thus, it would not be regarded as good practice to develop a workload for one member of staff which comprised only workshop delivery, while another did nothing but marketing and a third was solely lecturing to large groups.

Nature of work	Weighting
Pedagogic duties	
Studio/lecture/classroom teaching	1.5
Repetitious teaching	1.2
Demonstration	1.2
Laboratory work/machine shops/practicals	1.2
Vocational workshop (resourced areas/maths workshop)	1.2
Supervision of WRE e.g. kitchen/restaurant	1.2
Open/distance learning delivery	1.2
Work placements	1.2
Induction	1.2
Student activities	
a Learning support	1
b Portfolio preparation/assessment/internal verification	1
c Individual action planning	)
Tutorials	) 10 hours per year per student
Guidance	)
NRA preparation	
Support activities	
d Residential visits	1
e Research/consultancy arrangement	1
f Management of learning areas	1
g Management of support activity	1
h Course co-ordination/admin	1
i Preparation of resource materials	1
j Curriculum/course design	1
k External liaison	1
l Support for business development	1
m Support for market intelligence	1
n Design/development of marketing materials	1
o Support for promotional events	1
p Student recruitment	1
q Staff development	1
r Other professional duties	1
s Union activity	1

Table 1.1. Job analysis sheet

The weighted workloading system allows line managers to negotiate balanced individual workloads with their staff, recognising a wide range of responsibilities and professional activities, and accounting for 37 hours per week. New staff contracts do not set a limit on teaching hours. However, one of the aims of the workload system was to allay staff fears concerning unreasonably high workloads, by means of weightings and by acknowledging the full range of a teacher's duties, not just teaching.

Ownership is seen as being with the line manager and the course team for the full range of planned professional inputs. Monitoring forms have been developed from existing returns used by the college. These can be used for review and evaluation as the year progresses. Concerns were expressed about ensuring a balance between efficiency and quality. Managers are expected to ensure that minimum contract compliance is maintained, while also watching for overload of the most willing.

Individual weekly timetables are constructed. The lecturer keeps an activity record which is completed and returned each week to the curriculum team leader. A variance form is completed where there is a change to the lecturer's agreed workload. In cases where teachers exceed the agreed workload, the additional work will not be credited unless it is agreed in advance. A record of each teacher's hours over the year is built up, showing the deployment across the three categories of activity.

At the 'core' of the workload is the lecturer's conventional teaching timetable, weighted according to the Pedagogic Duties Tariff. The rest of the lecturer's 37 hours are accounted for by reference to the other two categories in the weighted workload system: Student Activities and Support Activities (see Table 1.1).

A teacher who ended the year in 'credit' (i.e. more hours agreed than an average of 37 per week) would be entitled to time off in lieu. Since this could cause subsequent operational difficulties, it is in the programme centre manager's own interests to manage the system with the resources at their disposal.

A conscious decision was made not to differentiate between FE and HE and not to recognise differences in class size in the weightings. Variations in workload caused by these factors can be addressed by using different elements in the tariff, e.g. by allocating hours to Student Activities, such as portfolio preparation and tutorials, or to Support Activities, such as Research or Course Co-ordination.

Programme centre managers are currently responsible for agreeing workloads with their staff. As more staff sign new contracts and come within the caseloading system, the volume of staff involved will mean that this function will need to be devolved to team leaders. Programme centre managers will be well equipped to support the team leaders in this function, having had the experience of operating the process themselves.

Effects of the system

When the system was first introduced, the distribution of staff workloads across the three workload categories tended to reflect traditional differences in emphasis in different curriculum areas, e.g. staff in continuing education (including GCE and GCSE) had workload profiles which centred on group teaching, whereas art and design staff spent time on portfolio preparation. Levels of activity concerned with external liaison and support for business development also differed widely across the college. It is hoped that with time, and experience of using the workload system, this distribution will even out across the college.

Previously there had been considerable variation concerning workloads of staff and the interpretation of cover arrangements in different programme centres. The introduction of the weighted workload system has introduced a degree of standardisation, although periodic reviews will be needed to ensure uniformity of interpretation. It may also be necessary to develop policies, setting out guiding principles regarding individual workloads, e.g. whether every teacher should include a range

of activities in their workload or the extent to which specialisation by individuals is desirable.

The aim of the system was to recognise the full range of a lecturer's professional activities, accounting for 37 hours per week, and to allay fears of unreasonably high teaching loads made possible by the introduction of new contracts. This aim seems to have been achieved. It will not be possible to quantify the effects on productivity until more staff on new contracts have operated within the workload system for a year. However, there has been no evidence of staff or programme centre managers seeking to push the system to its limits, e.g. by programme managers seeking to impose a workload of 30 hours workshop teaching, or of staff seeking to 'work-to-rule' by using the weightings to reduce their previous workload.

The college management closely monitored quantitative and qualitative information concerning the working of the new system during its first year of operation (1994-5) and will revise it as necessary in the light of this review.

Update

In 1995-6 the college is still working with the system as described above. However, as more staff are involved, responsibility for negotiating staff workloads may pass to team leaders.

Chapter 2

Type 1 and Type 2 activities

David Ellerby

Principal, Harlow College

Background

Harlow is a tertiary college serving West Essex and East Hertfordshire. It has about 2,000 full-time and 6,000 part-time students. A major restructuring in the summer of 1994 reduced the number of managements posts by 40% and organised the college into four faculties and three service areas (External Services, College Development & Evaluation, and Commercial Services), plus finance and personnel sections.

The Corporation invited NATFHE to enter into negotiations for new contracts for lecturers and management spine staff. This led to a collective agreement in March 1995, under which all lecturers and management spine staff were given new contracts, the terms of which were fully implemented in September 1995.

The model

In the Harlow College contract, for both lecturers and management spine staff, Type 1 and Type 2 activities are defined as follows:

- Type 1 includes teaching, invigilation, work placement visits, timetabled group tutorials and cover
- Type 2 includes programme leadership, programme tutoring, major project work, promotional, recruitment and guidance work, and consultancy

Programme leadership

This is an important role, acknowledged by the Type 2 caseload, the amount of which is determined by means of a formula based on the size of the programme, and quantified in terms of the annual guided learning hours.

Programme tutorship

Programme tutorship is referred to in both Type 1 and Type 2. This is a reflection of the variety of activities embraced by the role of the programme tutor, i.e. activities timetabled for the group and activities which are individual student-based.

For each full-time group of students, there is a 30-minute weekly tutorial, i.e. the programme tutor is timetabled for 30 minutes each week for 36 weeks as Type 1 'timetabled group tutorial'. In addition, the programme tutor is credited with one hour of Type 2 annual caseload for each member of the tutor group as at 1 November. In the event that students withdraw from or enter into the tutor group after 1 November, then Type 2 annual caseload is adjusted in line with the group size on 1 February and 15 May (these being the FEFC's second and third tri-annual census dates).

(For full-time groups of learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, the one hour referred to in the above paragraph is increased by two hours. This is in recognition of the additional funding provided by the FEFC for these students.)

Major project work

This is credited as Type 2 caseload on a project-by-project basis. The amount of credit reflects the size of the project and is determined as part of the proposal process for college development projects.

Promotional, recruitment and guidance work

All lecturers are involved in recruitment and guidance as an integral part of their duties. Type 2 annual caseload is only given to staff who are core members of their faculty advisory team. The amount of credit reflects their level of involvement in recruitment and guidance, above that which all other lecturers undertake as part of their normal duties.

Consultancy

The level of Type 2 caseload is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Internal verification

This is credited as Type 2 caseload on a module-by-module basis and is based on the guided learning of the module and the number of students.

Effects of the model

The model recognises the importance of programme leadership (i.e. curriculum management) and programme tutorship (i.e. student management). This is consistent with the college's middle-management structure, which comprises section heads and senior tutors. The college's

capacity to give credit for this (and the other activities described above) has been achieved by:

- efficiency gains secured by removing the Silver Book figure of 756 hours
- the significantly increased flexibility of the new contract
- the removal of class contact remission for Grade 2 lecturers
- the business effectiveness improvements secured by increasing weekly hours and reducing holidays

The caseload model enables extensive monitoring of staff utilisation, while simultaneously giving heads of faculties much greater flexibility in timetabling.

Future developments of the model are likely to include refinement of the Type 1 caseload to embrace funding units generated from student recruitment, retention and achievement, and to allocate Type 1 caseload to teams, rather than to individuals. The latter has already occurred in some cases for Type 2 caseload.

Chapter 3

Relative workloading: a formulaic approach

Dr Ed Sallis

Deputy Principal, Brunel College of Arts and Technology

Background

Work on caseloading at Brunel College started in 1993. At the time, 'caseloading' was not part of the FE vocabulary and the original exercise was known as 'relative workloading'. The project brief was to produce a fairer and more rational method of allocating academic staff workloads than had been practical under the Silver Book. An internal research group was established to look at the problem of how to produce a system that was both more equitable and which would use scarce staff resources effectively.

Research exercise

The work on caseloading was undertaken as a research exercise. The aim was to debate the issues and to understand whether there were better ways of organising staff time than those based on the narrow concept of

class contact. The research group consisted of the Deputy Principal and the Heads or Deputy Heads of Faculty. The group's brief was to see whether caseloading, as it has come to be known, had merit and to assess what problems might be encountered in implementing it.

The initial work concentrated on finding a common definition of the work of the lecturer and analysing the components of the role. This was a difficult exercise, especially in a college that has a diverse range of work, including a sizeable amount of craft and workshop supervision. After considerable debate, the six main elements of role that were considered to influence workload were agreed as follows:

- class size
- health and safety
- mode of delivery
- the complexity of a lecturer's programme
- the amount of assessment
- special factors, e.g. course management, development work

The next stage of the research was to devise a workable scheme that would convert the work on the lecturers' role into a practical scheme for determining workloads. A model was required that would guide the work. After much deliberation there were seen to be many parallels between devising a formula for workloads and job evaluation. The idea of allocating points to the component elements of the lecturers' role was seen to be the way forward.

What was created was the matrix in Table 3.1. The idea was that points would be allocated to each of the six elements. After exhaustive empirical work on a sample of timetables that were selected as benchmarks, a five-point scale was agreed.

In theory, the final product is simple to operate. Each timetable would be scored against the matrix. Points would be allocated according to the amount of work being undertaken in each of the elements. However, it was recognised that this was a difficult task and where difficulties or

Points	1	2	3	4	5
Factors					
1. Average class size	up to 12	13-18	19-24	25-35	35+
2. Safety	Theory based	Science lab based	Workshops and RWE	Heavy machinery workshops	
3. Mode of delivery	75-100% Practical	50-74% Practical	25-49% Practical	0-24% Practical	
4. Complexity of the programme	------- increasing complexity ----►				
5. Assessment outside the class	------- increasing complexity ----►				
6. Special factors	Course management, development work, etc.				

Table 3.1. Academic staff workloading

ambiguities arose, it was proposed that these would be referred to an appeals panel who would arbitrate and use a number of benchmark timetables to make their judgement.

Because of the difficulties of the allocation exercise it was agreed that the points would be grouped into bands. The bands are shown in Table 3.2. It was agreed that the relationship between bands and hours was a separate exercise and for this reason no hours are shown in the table. No

band	hours
7-10	
11-14	
15-18	
19-22	
23-26	
27-30	

Table 3.2. Bands

consideration was given to how the hours for each band should be determined although they could, if so desired, form the basis of negotiation with the trade unions.

The final step after creating the model was to test it against every timetable in the college to see if it did its job. While this exercise led to some refinements, on the whole the model discriminated in the ways that the group had intended. Broadly, it gave:

- lower hours to staff with complex timetables and who were teaching large groups of students
- higher hours to staff with simpler programmes and fewer students

Evaluation

While the work up until this stage had been positive, it was felt important to evaluate the model thoroughly before any decision was made concerning implementation. A number of perceived difficulties emerged:

- the model was potentially very bureaucratic. Considerable time and energy would have to be spent in testing every timetable against the model. Numerous appeals could become a feature of the system causing considerable additional work
- it was by no means clear, despite the considerable research, that the final outcome would meet with universal approval
- the outcome was not a genuine exercise in caseloading. It still finally measured a lecturer's role in contact hours. What had been created was a process that still mirrored the approach of the Silver Book, but was more complex
- the formulaic workloading model was seen as an essentially top-down approach. It would not foster staff ownership of the process and could result in conflict over its operation

At this stage it was decided to abandon the system and not to implement it. However, the exercise had not been without its uses. It provided the group with considerable insight into the problem of how to devise a more equitable approach to workloads. It also showed the importance of carrying out a research exercise prior to any implementation. The sensitivity of the issue of workloads make this an area where very careful preparatory work is essential. It was felt that it was better to abandon an approach than to implement a faulty system. What eventually replaced it was a more genuine exercise in caseloading based on an income and expenditure resource model (see Part II, Chapter 6).

Part II

Caseloading

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Chapter 4
A pilot study

Jennifer Sims

Accrington and Rossendale College

Background

Accrington and Rossendale College is a tertiary college which caters for industrial and semi-rural areas of Lancashire. The college recruits over 4,000 FTEs per year, comprising some 2,400 full-time students and up to 20,000 total enrolments in the course of a year. The college employs 350 full-time staff and some 600 part-time staff at any one time.

The college operates on six main sites spread over 20 square miles, making college communications difficult. Each of the college centres specialises in different vocational areas and attempts are made to minimise staff and student travel between sites. The college is in a very competitive market in East Lancashire with three other FE colleges close by along the M65 corridor, a number of private training providers and two opted-out grammar schools. Survival, therefore, depends on

providing the best possible service to students and being more successful and efficient than competitors.

The college has a very broad curriculum and covers a full range of vocational education and training, from Basic Skills to degrees. To meet the developing needs of local industry and the demand for core skills in the workforce, the college has developed franchised provision in many companies.

In seeking to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse student community, both actual and potential, the college has been active in developing flexible learning over several years. Although the college has achieved some increase in flexibility, the rate of progress at Accrington and Rossendale, in common with other colleges, has been slower than anticipated. In order to understand the reasons for this slow rate of progress, it is necessary to examine the broader national context for the development of flexible colleges, and the barriers to progress. It was to address some of these barriers that the college decided to develop a system of caseloading.

Caseloading and the flexible college

Caseloading is a method of allocating workload that measures outcomes rather than the time spent achieving those outcomes. It relies on the person with the responsibility for the caseload using their professional expertise to decide on the most appropriate method of achieving the outcomes. For a lecturer, the caseload will relate to the number of students they deal with and the qualifications the students achieve.

In the past ten years the FE sector has undergone a culture change in its approach to teaching and learning: from a teacher-led to a student-centred approach; from the 'course-based' to the 'learner-centred' college. The student support systems that were tangential to the course, now make up the framework that holds together individual learning pathways to nationally recognised qualifications. A flexible college

requires flexible staff. That's the theory, but to what extent are colleges flexible?

The concept of the flexible college was set out in the two volumes of *Flexible Colleges* (FEU, 1991). The concept of the learner-centred college has become central to thinking on the direction for colleges' development in the 1990s. A glance at college strategic plans reveals a recurrence of key words and phrases such as 'modularisation', 'individual action planning', 'threshold services' that suggest acceptance of the concept:

It seems that FE colleges have been bordering on flexibility for some time. Although the need for flexibility is generally accepted and recent developments in qualifications and funding have supported increased flexibility, it seems that this potential for flexibility has yet to be fully realised across a critical mass of college provision. It seems that the flexible college exists to a greater or lesser degree in every college, but that no college is wholly flexible. This was borne out by an FEU survey, 'How Flexible Are You?', in spring 1995.

This gradual and rather slow progress is creating its own problems. Where flexible learning is bolted on to traditional course-based provision, efficiency can be reduced rather than increased. For example, flexible learning requires the provision of individual counselling and action planning. If this support is provided in addition to course hours, the result is an increase in the cost of provision. This style of learning only becomes cost effective if there is an infrastructure of learning centres and workshops, which can be used by large numbers of students following different learning programmes.

The need for change

One of the reasons for slow progress is that existing systems often discourage flexibility. In recent years, with the drive for efficiency, college managers have become increasingly intent on controlling lecturers' timetables to ensure that the full amount of class-contact time

is carried out by each lecturer. Most colleges have reduced course hours for students in an attempt to contain costs, and college managers and lecturers spend a great deal of time balancing course hours against staff hours. Everything must add up to the magic number of 756 hours — not only the number of class-contact hours per year for a lecturer on Silver Book conditions, but also, in many cases, the number of hours required to deliver one year of a full-time vocational qualification. This may be no coincidence.

This approach to the use of staff time encourages lecturers to react in certain ways. A reduction in course hours is perceived in terms of a reduction in the hours on their own timetables; delivering generic modules across different learning programmes means a reduction in their hours; the introduction of resource-based learning or accreditation of prior learning means a reduction in their hours. The only thing that does not mean a reduction in their timetables is fewer students in the group. The emphasis on the class-contact hour as the main, if not the only, measure of a lecturer's workload encourages lecturers to hang on to their hours wherever possible. At a time when colleges need to develop proficiency in target setting and link corporate, team and individual targets, lecturing staff have been distracted by a completely different set of targets — the need to chalk up class-contact hours. This gives a clear message: process is more important than outcomes. A culture change was clearly needed.

Moreover, by holding resources centrally and handing them out piecemeal, the professional judgement and expertise of lecturers are undermined. By failing to connect the way funding is allocated to the organisation and the way resources are allocated *within* the organisation, there is little incentive at team level to maximise the opportunities for earning funding. A clear relationship between delivery and the allocation of resources, means that the benefits of increased flexibility and efficiency will be felt by the team. The problems of low recruitment, coupled with lack of flexibility and efficiency, will also be felt at team level.

A culture change toward flexibility is being promoted in the relationship between the college and students, but it cannot be wholly successful unless the relationship between managers and staff is also reviewed. For some time, Accrington and Rossendale had been working to establish a student-centred approach. The expertise and the ability to respond quickly to students' needs reside at the level of the curriculum team. Under the traditional system, control of resources, in the form of staffing and consumables, is with senior management. This slows down the ability of curriculum teams to respond to students' needs and is therefore potentially detrimental to the quality of provision. It also devalues the professional expertise of lecturing staff, since decisions about the curriculum depend on the use of resources, resulting in a culture of dependency on management.

In the summer term of 1994, a group of senior managers in the college began to consider ways of developing caseloading. They were seeking a methods of allocating work load that would move away from the notion of the class-contact hour as a measure of workload and toward a more equitable distribution of work load based on outcomes.

Aims in developing a caseloading system

Following a series of discussions, the group of senior managers at Accrington and Rossendale College agreed a 'wish list' for a system of caseloading:

The system should:

- be perceived to be fair

  The present system takes no account of the number of students for whom a lecturer is responsible. Differences in the amount of additional work generated by a class-contact hour are widely recognised to be unfair. Caseloading should overcome these inequities.

- be based on outcomes

  The funding methodology emphasises the accountability of colleges and awards funding according to outcomes, in terms of recruitment, retention and achievement. This accountability should be integral to caseloading.

- emphasise recruitment, retention and achievement

  The changed emphasis from recruitment alone as the main basis for funding colleges, to recruitment, retention *and* achievement should be recognised in the allocation of resources, including staffing costs.

- encourage flexibility

  The present system puts up barriers to flexibility. Caseloading should encourage flexibility by ensuring that lecturers, as well as students, can benefit from it.

- reward efficiency

  Under the traditional system, any efficiencies made by a team benefit the central budget and not the team itself or their students. Caseloading should ensure that any savings made as a result of a team's efforts, benefit that team's own budget.

- empower and enable teams

  Teams of staff should make decisions about how to deliver the curriculum to meet their students' needs. They should be free to use available resources as they think appropriate, rather than according to bureaucratic formulae, such those that monitor course and class contact hours.

- work in conjunction with other current demands

  Increased administration is a growing problem for lecturers. The development of caseloading should seek to

make use of existing systems, where possible, and not create additional administration.

- acknowledge 'we want you to work differently, not harder'

  The college states that this is one of the ways in which increases in efficiency should be achieved. However, according to the college management guidelines, new contracts mean an increase in class-contact hours. Caseloading should provide a system where the emphasis is on an increase in *outcomes* — more students and/or more qualifications. It is up to the lecturer and the team to decide on how to achieve this.

Essential elements

To address the above criteria, the essential elements of the caseloading system that were agreed at Accrington and Rossendale College, were:

- resources for part-time staffing and for consumables will be delegated to the teams as one budget
- teams can use the budget in whatever way they think most appropriate for the needs of students, within the context of college policy
- resources will be allocated according to the number of FEFC units the teams achieve
- programmes not funded by FEFC will be translated into FEFC unit equivalents

Operation

The model — caseloading

In devising a system of caseloading at Accrington and Rossendale College the intention was to empower teams and to give them the

freedom to innovate, in the same way that students are being empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Empowerment means having the resources and the information necessary to influence and change the way things are done. In the Accrington and Rossendale caseloading pilot, resources for part-time staffing and for consumables are delegated to the teams. These resources are allocated according to the number of FEFC units the teams achieve and the teams have the freedom to use these resources in whatever way they think most appropriate. Two very different teams were involved in the initial pilot: Performing Arts and Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy.

The amount of delegation may not appear radical. However, it is coupled with the removal of the monitoring of class-contact hours for staff or students. Managers are not concerned with the number of hours it takes to achieve the outcomes, but simply in the achievement of the outcomes. The outcomes include reference to college and team quality standards and to college policies and procedures. It is important to point this out as there is often a concern that 'freedom' leads to chaos. However, the kind of freedom that Accrington and Rossendale wishes to encourage is a freedom which requires a clear structure.

> *'True freedom is not the absence of structure — letting employees go off and do whatever they want — but rather a clear structure which enables people to work within established boundaries in an autonomous and creative way. It is important to establish for people from the beginning, the ground rules and boundary conditions under which they are working: what can they decide, what can't they decide.'*
>
> Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *The Change Masters*

What is devolved

Funds for part-time staffing and consumables are devolved to teams as a single budget, with no restrictions on how these resources are to be spent, apart from consideration of overall college policies. This differs from previous practice in that, although some delegation did take place,

it was part-time *hours* that were delegated, and a specific consumables budget which could not be vired without approval from senior management.

In addition to the allocation of a budget, the model also removes the requirement for the central monitoring of class contact hours, either for staff or for students. The notion of 756 (or new contract equivalent) class-contact hours for a lecturer has no place in the model. Members of the curriculum team decide on the profile of support that will enable students to achieve their learning goals and organise their workload accordingly. They also decide how to organise other tasks that the team carry out, for example curriculum development or recruitment. It is possible for some members of the team to spend relatively more time in class contact while others might spend more time on non-teaching activities, according to individual strengths and the needs of the team.

Calculating resource allocations

The funding methodology provides the basis for allocating resources. This is more appropriate than using student numbers because it mirrors the way the college itself is funded, and also emphasises recruitment, retention and achievement.

A team is allocated resources in relation to the number of funding units it earns or those it is estimated that it will earn. As the units earned by the team change during the academic year, so resources are added or subtracted. Resourcing is affected by retention rates, achievement rates and by the recruitment of students, not only at the beginning of the academic year but at any time. There is therefore an incentive for teams to improve recruitment, retention and achievement.

Resources are allocated initially on the basis of the unit targets, agreed by the team, for the college strategic bid to the Funding Council. A simple example of this calculation is given in Table 4.1.

QUAL.	Entry	On prog.	Achievement	Student nos.	Total units
BTEC ND 1	8	84	0	20	1,840
BTEC ND 2	0	84	20	15	1,560
BTEC FIRST	8	84	10	20	2,040
A LEVEL 1	8	28	0	18	648
A LEVEL 2	0	28	6.7	16	555.2
Total units					**6,643.2**

Table 4.1. A simple example of calculating resource allocations for a college strategic bid to the Funding Council

The target units for the team would be 6,643.2. The unit calculations are based on the FEFC funding tariff for 1994-5. Where qualifications are not FEFC funded (e.g. HE provision), then notional FEFC unit equivalents are calculated.

To decide on the part-time staffing budget for the team, the number of units a full-time lecturer can deliver had to be determined. An initial figure of 1,800 units per full-time lecturer was used. This is based on the FEFC assumption that one full-time student will earn the college an average of 100 units in one academic year, using the basic unit tariff. If a lecturer is assumed to be responsible for the learning of 18 FTEs, then a caseload will be 1,800 units per year. It must be emphasised that this does not assume a class size of 18. The students can be working in many different ways and for different spans of time.

The number of units that can be delivered by the full-time staffing establishment can be calculated using the 1,800 unit caseload.

Example: Team target 11,500 units

4 FT lecturers x 1,800 = 7,200 units

11,500 – 7,200 = 4,300 units (part-time staffing budget)

For each unit in excess of the full-time staffing establishment, an amount of money is allocated, according to a tariff decided by the college. This

calculation relates the proportion of the budget which is spent on teaching staff to the amount of money allocated to the team per funding unit earned. For the pilot it was agreed that the teams would be allocated £8 per unit over their full-time staffing establishment. This figure was derived from the fact that 55% of the previous year's college budget was spent on teaching staff. A marginal funding unit earns £14.50 from FEFC and £8 is 55% of £14.50.

The calculations are deliberately simplistic. No account was taken of the different amounts of funding the college receives for core, marginal and demand-led funding units. The aim was to provide a means of testing the concept, which could be put into operation immediately. The calculation allows the main elements of the concept to be put into operation, i.e. the team:

- have control of their resources; they have the responsibility to live within their resources
- understand how the resources are earned and the implications of under- and over-achieving their targets

More detailed work has since been done on income and costs for teams across the college and development of the system will draw on this.

Implementation

A steering group was set up in the 1994 summer term to run the pilot. The group consisted of eight managers who had been involved in the original discussions on developing caseloading, including the Principal and the two Vice-principals. The following stages of implementation were agreed:

Task	Responsibility	Timescale
Stage 1 Identify teams who may be interested in participating in the pilot	Steering group	July 1994
Stage 2 Staff development session for team leaders, leading to identification of team leaders who wish to pursue the idea	Project leader	September 1994
Stage 3 Work with individual teams to explain the system and its implications and to reach agreement on participation	Project leader and relevant team leaders	September-October 1994
Stage 4 Hand over of budgets and continue staff development	Project leader and team leaders in consultation with steering group	October-December 1994

Table 4.2. Stages of implementation

Stage 1 — Identification of suitable teams

Four teams were identified at this stage. They were selected on the basis that they were already adopting flexible methods of working, such as modular delivery or balancing workloads in the team outside timetabled commitments. Teams for the pilot needed to be responsible for discrete groups of students requiring a minimum of servicing from other teams. The aim was to run the system with 'winners' — teams which had something to gain from the system and to minimise potential problems.

This is not to say that the system could not be used for all teams in the college, but to accept that it is better to deal with problems incrementally.

Stage 2 — Staff development

The principal introduced the staff development session and emphasised the reasons for the proposed changes. The project leader dealt with the operational issues. Budgets were prepared giving details of the potential income for the teams in the current academic year using the caseloading system and the existing system. All the team leaders were attracted by the idea of having more autonomy and a clear relationship between student numbers and achievements and the allocation of resources. The budgets showed that two of the teams would be better off financially using the caseloading system and two would be worse off. Predictably the former two, the Performing Arts and the Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy teams, elected to go ahead immediately with caseloading (subject to the agreement of their teams). The other two chose to be kept up to date with developments with a view to participating in the next academic year.

Stage 3 — Deciding to participate

The project leader met separately with the Performing Arts and the Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy teams and their respective team leaders. It was emphasised that the decision to participate was the team's and that there was no compulsion. Both teams agreed to participate and to be involved in monitoring the effects of caseloading for the pilot study. Both teams included staff on Silver Book as well as on new contracts.

Stage 4 — The pilot

Funding units were calculated and budgets allocated through close consultation between the team leaders and the project leader, who in turn reported to the steering group. The close working relationship between the team leaders and the project manager continued for the

duration of the pilot. Problems were dealt with as they arose and adaptations were made to the system as was necessary and appropriate. The system was fully in place in January 1995. However, the team had already begun to make changes to their style of operation in the previous term, as they became aware of the increased potential for flexibility available to them.

Effects

The pilot study

As part of the FEU/FEDA caseloading project, a pilot study was undertaken by Accrington and Rossendale College to measure the effectiveness of their caseloading model in relation to:

- delivery of the curriculum
- staff attitudes and motivation
- efficient use of resources

One of the main reasons for the introduction of caseloading at Accrington and Rossendale College was that it would provide a more effective method of supporting the development of the flexible curriculum. The two teams involved in the pilot were already operating flexibly. The theory to be tested was that caseloading should make it easier for them to operate and should encourage them to become more efficient and flexible, where possible.

Table 4.3 shows the research methods used.

Monitoring

The effects of caseloading were evaluated in the FEU/FEDA project by questionnaires and interviews with participating staff and monitored by a steering group.

Research method	What is measured	Responsibility	Timescale
Interviews	Staff attitudes and motivation	Project leader Independent sociologist	January 1995 June 1995
Questionnaire	Staff attitudes and motivation	Project leader	February 1995
Meetings with teams	Staff attitudes and motivation Effect on curriculum delivery	Project leader Team leaders	January, March weekly
Meetings with team leaders	Staff attitudes Effect on curriculum Use of resources	Project leader Steering group	Weekly May 1995
Comparison of unit costings	Effective use of resources	College accountant	June 1995
Comparison of retention and achievement rates	Effective use of resources Effect on curriculum delivery	College management information systems	June 1995

Table 4.3. The research methods used in the pilot study

To appreciate the context in which the study took place, a profile of the two teams which participated in the pilot is provided.

Team profile — Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

In recent years the team has had recruitment problems, particularly in the area of Beauty Therapy. By increasing the range of qualifications on offer and by improving access to qualifications through modular delivery and year-round entry, the team has significantly increased part-time recruitment while maintaining full-time numbers. The team is one of the most flexible in the college, in terms of the range of delivery

methods and the possibilities for individual learning programmes and access to assessment. This drive for flexibility and efficiency in this case has come from the need to survive.

The team consists of five permanent teaching staff, including the team leader, and eight part-time staff. There are two technicians and they participated in the staff development for caseloading and are involved in team meetings. Two of the permanent teaching staff are on new contracts. An element of servicing is involved since staff from the Science team teach elements of the Beauty Therapy qualifications.

The team is responsible for delivering the following qualifications: NVQ 1-3 Hairdressing (full- or part-time); BTEC National Diploma in Beauty Therapy (full-time); IHBC Beauty Specialist Diploma (full- or part-time); Body massage (part-time); Aromatherapy Diploma (part-time); Reflexology Diploma (part-time); Advanced Nail Techniques (part-time Saturday programme).

The courses are listed as full- or part-time, but in reality they come closer to mode-free attendance than any others in the college. Students can put together a programme of modules to suit their own requirements and entry is possible at any time of year to most of these qualifications. A high percentage of students are part time and many are women returners. The team provides NVQ qualifications for students on Youth Training schemes, operated by the college as a managing agent, and also works with students with learning difficulties at NVQ Level 1.

All the qualifications delivered by the Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy team are modular. A variety of learning and assessment methods is used to increase flexibility and access, both to learning and assessment. Underpinning knowledge is delivered through demonstration, open learning packages and information-giving sessions. Workshop training sessions provide opportunities to acquire and practise skills and for formative and peer assessment. The two commercial salons offer opportunities for formative and summative assessment. Assessment for NVQ qualifications is 'on demand'.

In addition to their teaching and administrative duties, the team is responsible for liaising with employers, including assessment in the workplace and for specialist marketing of their provision both in schools and other venues. The team are also responsible for the organisation and operation of the two commercial salons.

Team profile — Performing Arts

The team has grown steadily over the last five years with the introduction of new qualifications and on the basis of its excellent reputation both for student progression and as a provider of local community theatre. The nature of performing arts has meant that team members have traditionally been flexible in their approach to timetabling, frequently working additional hours with no recompense in either money or time, because of the demands of rehearsal and production.

The team has six permanent teaching staff and one technician. There are also ten part-time staff who teach mostly on specialist areas such as stage design or recording techniques. No staff from other college teams teach on Performing Arts programmes but Performing Arts staff provide servicing for A-level Music and Theatre Studies, which are administered through a specialist A-level team.

The team offers the following qualifications: BTEC First Diploma in Performing Arts (full-time); BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts (full-time); BTEC National Diploma in Popular Music (full-time); BA in Band Studies (weekend and distance learning); Recording Techniques (part-time Saturday programme).

Most students are full time. The opportunity to study individual units of BTEC qualifications is available, but there is little take-up and it is not proactively marketed. Most students are 16-19, with 15-20% of the full-time intake over 19. All of the Band Studies students are mature (over 19).

The predominant style of teaching and learning in the Performing Arts area is through practical projects which integrate different areas of the curriculum. However, a variety of other styles are also used, including open learning packages, large group lectures, master classes, professional workshops, one-to-one instrumental tuition and small group tuition. Assessment methods include written and practical assessments, and written and aural testing. Most assessments are continuous or end of module. Only the degree course has final examinations.

As with the Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy team, Performing Arts staff have some marketing and recruitment responsibilities. They also liaise with local community groups to provide theatre for the community. They organise a programme of four or five productions per academic year and this involve a great deal of extra staff time.

(i) Effects on curriculum delivery

A number of changes were made to the ways in which curriculum and assessment were delivered by the teams, during the caseloading pilot. These changes were instigated by the teams and/or team leaders rather than by management.

Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy team

The Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy team decided to implement the following changes:

- to employ a part-time assessor instead of a lecturer for a number of hours in the commercial salons

  This was done according to the personnel policies of the college. The team leader realised that it was more economical to employ an assessor than a lecturer. Assessment on demand meant that there was a problem in trying to provide individual assessment for large groups of students. The employment of an assessor gave students

increased opportunities for assessment and allowed lecturers to be used for activities that required broader skills.

- to employ a receptionist to run the reception area for the salons, and to assess reception skills

  Reception had been a continuous problem. As only a few students (usually four) would be in the reception area at any one period, it had not been viable for a lecturer to be with the group. Instead the lecturers in the salons would leave their classes to oversee students in reception. This was not satisfactory for the students in reception, the students in the class or the lecturers. By employing a receptionist, it was possible to improve the organisation of reception. The students had more opportunity for assessment in reception skills and classes in the salon were not left without a lecturer. The team as a whole welcomed this development.

- to employ a part-time member of staff to undertake specialist marketing

  As described in the team profile, the team had improved recruitment through increased enrolment to part-time provision, attracting women returners in particular. They recognised that there was a demand for provision from a specific market, but had difficulty in finding time for lecturing staff to go out and target this market. A part-time member of staff, who was very familiar with the work of the team, was employed to visit a set number of venues, such as mother and toddler groups, where there might be potential students. Her task was to prepare a portfolio on the work of the team and to make a number of visits. This was done for a set fee within an agreed time frame. However, she was free to organise visits to suit herself. At this stage, it is not possible to gauge the success of this

venture in recruitment terms. The team is pleased that work, which they saw as necessary, has been done in a more effective way than would have been possible if full-time staff had been responsible for this marketing activity, in addition to their other duties.

- to commission a part-time member of staff to write an open learning package for a generic unit required for Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy courses

  The open learning package will benefit students by increasing access for those who cannot attend classes for this unit. It will also benefit staff by allowing them to concentrate on other areas of work.

Performing Arts team

The Performing Arts team decided to implement the following changes:

- to produce an action plan for the improvement of retention rates for the next academic year

  The Performing Arts team were concerned when they realised the amount of funding which was lost to the team as a result of a number of students leaving during the first term. Work has been going on across the college on this issue. Most teams have tended to be defensive when faced with the problem and have reacted by pointing to factors outside their control as the cause. The Performing Arts team considered that some students would have left whatever their efforts, but also recognised that there were actions the team could take. These included increasing tutorial time in the first term and improving counselling and guidance at the interview stage. The team produced the action plan of its own accord. Managers had not requested the production of an action plan at that time.

- to weight staff and student timetables so that intensive production periods are balanced by lighter workloads at other times

  The freedom to do this was recognised as a positive benefit. Although this had happened to some degree in the past, the approval of managers had always had to be obtained. The realisation that this strategy was legitimate made the team feel free to organise its time according to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of students, and not according to a formula. One of the most telling comments was that timetabling for the next academic year, which took place at the end of the pilot, was much easier than on previous occasions. This was because time did not have to be spent adding up hours for staff and students.

- to employ a specialist to create a set design for use in a production

  In the past this was done by a part-time lecturer as part of teaching time. However, the team wanted to separate the specialist support needed for the production from the teaching time spent with students preparing for the production, since these tasks were not always compatible. By employing a specialist set designer, the students gained from the professional standard of the design, achieved as a result of separating the design and the teaching tasks. The team plan to continue the practice of employing specialist help for some tasks in order to increase the realism of the work environment for students. They are considering employing a front-of-house manager for productions, who would organise front-of-house and assess students. The idea was taken from the use of the receptionist in Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy.

Teams plans for the subsequent academic year

The pilot teams planned to implement the following developments in the subsequent academic year:

- access for students to more qualifications within existing teaching/learning time

  Recognising that more qualifications benefit the individual students and earn more resources for the team, both teams have introduced some dual accreditation into their provision.

- more time for one-to-one tutorial guidance

  The teams have recognised that retention and achievement can be improved through enhanced tutorial support and guidance for students.

- more use of open learning materials

  The use of open learning is not seen as a threat by the teams. It is seen as an alternative, not a substitute, for more traditional learning methods. Open learning allows more flexibility in recruitment and attendance patterns.

- plans for individual staff members to develop specialist roles, e.g. counsellor

  This has arisen as a result of individual staff development planning sessions between the team leader and each team member. Now that it is accepted that not everyone needs to make the same kind of contribution to the work of the team (i.e. 21 hours class contact), individuals are looking to their own strengths to identify areas they might wish to develop.

- integration of some A-level provision with BTEC groups

  Servicing has been perceived as a potential difficulty since a team member will be undertaking work controlled by another team. The Performing Arts team have responded

by deciding to integrate Performing Arts A-level students and Music A-level students with some of the BTEC students, where appropriate. This will go some way to addressing the small numbers in these A-level groups. Staff also feel that students will benefit from contact with other students on courses with a related vocational orientation.

(ii) Effects on staff motivation and satisfaction

It could be argued that the two teams in the Accrington and Rossendale caseloading pilot were already working flexibly and that external pressures to increase flexibility and efficiency would have led to similar developments, even without the autonomy offered by caseloading. Consideration of the effects of caseloading on staff attitudes, however, suggest that staff were encouraged to take the initiative in areas that would previously have been initiated and led by managers.

The college is structured in five teaching divisions each with a Head of Division who is a member of the senior management team. The Head of Division is the line manager for the team leaders. Divisions have between five and seven curriculum teams. The two teams which participated in the pilot are both in the Division of Professional Services and Leisure. Teams are central to the college's structure. In the summer before the caseloading pilot started, jobs for team leaders were regraded and all team leaders were offered management spine contracts. Previously, they had been senior lecturers or promoted L2 staff. A new management structure, which took effect from August 1995, further strengthened the role of the team leader by reducing the number of senior managers. The role of Head of Division remains.

New contracts were offered to all teaching staff and managers in March 1994. Although caseloading is not a response to the introduction of new contracts, it was made clear that a system of caseloading would be introduced across the college when all staff were on new contracts. About 25% of staff initially accepted the new contracts. As in many other

colleges across the country, the academic year 1994-5 was characterised by the industrial dispute and some industrial action was taken by members of the National Association of Lecturers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE). For many staff, caseloading is inextricably linked with new contracts.

The effects of the pilot on staff attitudes and motivation were monitored through an initial questionnaire early in the pilot and by interviews at the end. The questionnaire was sent to 16 staff and replies were received from eight, most of whom were managers. To ensure a complete response and to gather more in-depth qualitative information, the final research was done through individual interviews with all 16 staff involved (this included members of the two teams and the managers who comprised the steering group). These interviews were carried out by an independent researcher with a sociology background, who had no previous knowledge of caseloading or of any of those to be interviewed. The summary of staff responses to caseloading are based mainly on the interviews. They are presented according to the three categories of staff interviewed: managers (seven), team leaders (two), lecturers (seven).

Results

The interviewees were asked to respond to a series of positive statements about caseloading based on their practical knowledge and/or experience of the system operating in the college. They were asked to respond on a five-point scale:

strongly disagree *disagree* *undecided* *agree* *strongly agree*

The following tables show the statements and the responses of the 16 interviewees, categorised according to their roles in the organisation — lecturer, team leader, manager.

Caseloading is a fairer way of allocating workload

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	2	5	0
Team leaders	0	0	0	0	2
Managers	0	0	1	2	4

Caseloading encourages teams to find the most effective ways of delivering the curriculum

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	0	6	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	1	2
Managers	0	0	0	3	4

Caseloading enhances relationships/improves opportunities for co-operation within the curriculum team

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	3	3	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	2	0
Managers	0	0	2	2	3

Caseloading encourages a higher degree of flexibility in curriculum delivery

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	0	6	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	0	2
Managers	0	0	0	3	4

Caseloading gives the lecturer/team leader more authority to decide what's best for students

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	2	4	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	0	2
Managers	0	0	0	3	4

Caseloading enables tutors to respond more speedily to students' needs

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	4	3	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	1	1
Managers	0	0	0	4	2

Caseloading facilitates the development of student-centred learning

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	1	5	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	1	1
Managers	0	0	0	5	2

Caseloading encourages efficiency in the delivery of the curriculum

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	1	5	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	1	1
Managers	0	0	1	4	2

Caseloading will lead to a more equitable sharing of resources within the college

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	6	1	0
Team leaders	0	0	0	1	1
Managers	0	0	3	3	1

Caseloading has the potential for encouraging curriculum teams to generate additional resources

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	1	4	1
Team leaders	0	0	0	0	2
Managers	0	0	2	2	3

Caseloading will enable a higher priority to be given to recruitment, retention and achievement levels of students

	strongly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	strongly agree
Lecturers	0	0	1	4	0
Team leaders	0	0	0	0	2
Managers	0	0	3	2	4

Commentary on results tables

The tables show that there is general approval for caseloading from all levels of staff involved in its operation.

It is interesting to note that the most consistent approval comes from the team leaders. Although there are only two of them, they are the individuals with the key roles in the system. They have a clear view of the system in operation, and of the implications for management and the college as a whole. The fact that lecturers were undecided on questions relating to the allocation of resources is in keeping with the fact that they have not had much involvement in this aspect of the system. If there is to be real transparency and autonomy, team members will need to understand the resourcing context. This will be included in recommendations for the development of the system.

Further questions related to the effect of the system on students and on working practices and asked respondents to identify changes that should be made to the system. The responses are summarised below.

Effects on students

The team leaders felt that students were getting a more realistic experience of the vocational area and improved opportunities for assessment because of the additional specialist help the teams had been able to buy in.

Lecturers commented on the increased potential for conducting assessments. They also observed that the team had had more funding at its disposal as a result of the system and that this would benefit students. Some lecturers felt that there was currently little difference from the students' perspective, but that there was potential as the system developed.

Effects on working practices

Both team leaders noted an increase in their own workloads. However, they did not see this as necessarily negative but as something which needed to be recognised so that the appropriate support could be provided. One team leader commented on an increased sense of vulnerability as she had more decisions to make and was concerned whether her decisions would be supported by senior management. This concern emphasises the changed roles of team leaders and senior managers and the need for a clear definition of parameters.

The lecturers felt that although their workloads had increased, this was due to the introduction of NVQs rather than caseloading. Several commented that timetabling for the new academic year had been much easier because there was now no need to concentrate on hours.

Some respondents felt that caseloading had enhanced relationships in the team, though others expressed concern that it placed greater pressure on team relationships and that there was the potential for tension. There was some concern that workloads had been balanced according to perceived stress levels in the team, rather than according to actual workload.

Changes to the system

Managers felt that:

- the allocation of resources needed to be more precise

Teams should have a complete picture of their income and expenditure, including central services, rooms, technology and staff.

- the implications of legislation for part-time teachers needed to be considered

  Under the caseload system, team leaders set contracts for part-time staff as and when required. New European legislation means that part-time staff are entitled to the same rights as full-time staff, so that careful consideration is needed of the types of contracts to be used.

- there needs to be a period of convergence to iron out inequalities between teams

  The extension of the caseloading system to the whole college would mean the inclusions of teams that are able to make a large profit on their income and others who make a loss. The need to ensure that the college fulfils its mission means that curriculum areas should not be put at risk. A period of convergence would therefore be needed, as would a system for supporting areas unable to make a profit.

Team leaders felt that:

- improved management information systems are needed

  Teams need to have speedy and accurate information on their current recruitment, retention and achievement position and associated funding units in order to control resources.

- staff development is needed for team leaders to support them in their enhanced role

Lecturers felt that:

- the whole team should be more involved in implementation

  Team leaders had most of the responsibility during the pilot and team members wanted to be more involved.

- there should be more information and transparency in the system

  Some lecturers felt that they were not sufficiently aware of the details of the system and, as a consequence, had not been able to participate effectively in deciding on the options available to the team.

Other comments

Comments were generally positive and constructive (see tables on pp61-3). Managers wanted to see the system extended to different curriculum teams. They were concerned about the dissemination of information about the system across the college in the light of the connection with new contracts. A senior manager stated:

> *'Certainly it is a step in the right direction. Caseloading complements other initiatives and is one of the key elements of a truly flexible college.'*

There is a clear role for managers in this system of caseloading but it is not the same role that they occupied previously. Managers are working with teams toward shared goals and targets. Instead of designing and controlling operations, their role is to provide a strong supporting framework; it is their role to remove barriers and change the organisational systems, in order to facilitate the achievement of goals and targets by individuals and teams.

Lecturers were more reserved in their comments, with several expressing the desire for more experience of the system before committing themselves. They wanted more information and thought that it was unfortunate that caseloading had been linked with new contracts. One lecturer expressed a view which provides a good summary of the situation:

'Outside the general industrial scenario the system is a good idea. However, it is difficult to warm to it when there is a threatening atmosphere regarding increasing workloads. All new contract negotiations seem to be about hours — caseloading isn't. How do they fit together? Therefore it is difficult not to be suspicious as to how caseloading might be used to confuse the issues. "It's all about trust" to quote the principal.'

The fact that many areas of concern expressed by lecturing staff are about their level of knowledge and involvement can be seen as a positive sign and a criticism of the way the system was implemented rather than the concept. Caseloading calls for total transparency and a high level of involvement from all staff. The fact that lecturers are seeking more transparency and involvement is an indication of the system's potential for increasing motivation.

(iii) Efficiency and productivity

Efficiency and productivity are key words in FE now, although there is much debate as to what precisely is meant by these terms and how they can be measured. There was no less a problem in the monitoring of this pilot study. It was decided to look for areas where hard statistics were available and where it was possible to make comparisons, both over periods of time and between caseloaded and non-caseloaded teams. Funding units needed to appear in these statistics. They reflect student numbers, retention and achievement rates. For the purpose of evaluating the caseloading pilot, the measure of *productivity* was taken as the number of funding units the team achieves, and the measure of *efficiency* as the cost of achieving each funding unit.

Methodology

One non-caseloaded team was used to provide a comparison with the two teams which were caseloaded. The choice of team for comparison was considered carefully. All teams in the college are different. Although subject to the same external and internal pressures to increase

productivity and efficiency, the different demands of different curriculum areas and the pressures from external bodies, such as awarding bodies and managing agents, vary from team to team. The Motor Vehicle team was chosen for comparison, because of the similarities with the caseloaded curriculum areas; all are heavily biased toward practical work and assessment; staff in the team have adopted some flexible working practices and are committed to improving efficiency.

The direct costs of delivery were used to determine the cost of delivering a single unit in each team:

- full-time teaching salaries
- part-time salaries (teachers and assessors)
- net servicing costs (servicing *in*, balanced against servicing *out*)
- consumables

Other costs such as technician support, accommodation and central services were not included. The reasons for this were twofold: the team has no control over these costs, given the current level of delegation of responsibility; and it is difficult to calculate these costs at team level, with any degree of accuracy, on the basis of the information currently available.

Final achievement rates were not available at the time of writing this report. To prevent any bias, the same percentage of achievement was assumed as for the previous year, although staff anticipate an improvement on these rates.

Results

These are shown in Figures 4.1-4.3. They show clearly that during the caseloading pilot, direct costs of delivery per unit were reduced. This is despite the fact that the teams received more in terms of real money under caseloading than they would have done under the system running elsewhere in the college. Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy received approximately 18% more in allocations for part-time staffing and consumables. Performing Arts received approximately 6% more. This is

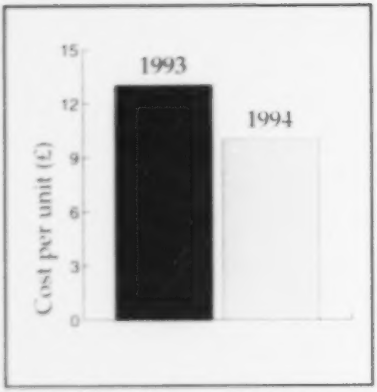

Figure 4.1. The cost of delivering an FEFC unit (based on direct costs for each term) — Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy

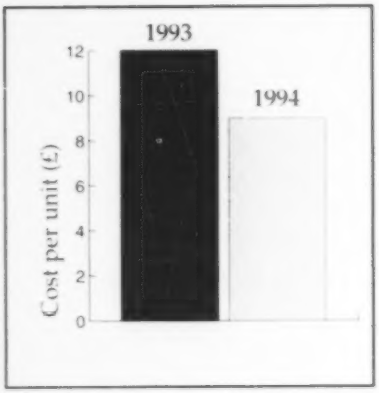

Figure 4.2. The cost of delivering an FEFC unit (based on direct costs for each term) — Performing Arts

NB. Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy and Performing Arts were caseloaded in 1994-5 and Motor Vehicle was not.

Figure 4.3. The cost of delivering an FEFC unit (based on direct costs for each term) — Motor Vehicle

because under the traditional system, groups are funded rather than individual students and individual student achievements.

It is impossible to state categorically that these reduced costs of delivery were entirely due to the introduction of the caseloading system. However, the figures for direct delivery costs across the college do not show a reduction in costs and so it is reasonable to assume that what has happened in these two teams was not replicated across the college. Figures 4.1-4.3 show that caseloading did not reduce efficiency and productivity and that, in all probability, it resulted in improvements.

A major question remains unanswered: what effect would caseloading have on a team that is currently running at a loss? In such a team there may not be the same incentive to increase income as this would serve to reduce the deficit, rather than earn additional resources. It would, however, make transparent the relative income and costs of running different curriculum areas and enable management to act on this information.

Ongoing work at Accrington and Rossendale, in preparation for the extension of caseloading, has included the breakdown of income and costs by curriculum teams. This information was not previously available and has challenged some long held assumptions.

Conclusions

Those who express interest in caseloading are often preoccupied with the detail of how resources are calculated and who does what in the system. This is important at an organisational level, but not essential to an understanding of the concept. Accrington and Rossendale are pleased to share information on details but emphasise that these are local decisions that relate to the current position in a particular college. They are not necessarily the right decisions for other colleges; nor do they represent an ideal, but rather a transitional stage. Managers and staff at Accrington and Rossendale are now involved in further debate as to how delegation of resources to teams can be extended and what the implications of this will be for the organisation as a whole.

Caseloading will not solve all the problems faced by the sector. It is one part of a cultural change that is taking place. Cultural change requires a paradigm shift, a challenge to widely held assumptions. At Accrington and Rossendale College, those involved in the caseloading pilot believe that they are developing a system that will help drive forward and support the development of the flexible college, not place bureaucratic barriers in the way of its achievement. In 1995-6, caseloading has been extended to Catering and a number of team leaders see caseloading as a possible solution to some of their problems. Accrington and Rossendale is committed to implementing caseloading across the whole college in 1996-7.

Chapter 5

Notional contact

James Hampton

Bournemouth and Poole College of FE

Background

Caseloading systems operate in a number of divisions at Bournemouth and Poole College:

- Pre-vocational Studies which is in the Department of Social and Community Studies and caters for a wide range of students who have learning difficulties and disabilities
- Business Administration in the Department of Business Studies and Computing
- Trowel Trades in the Department of Technology

In all the pilots, it was intended that caseloading would bring a number of benefits:

- devolution and ownership of responsibilities in the curriculum framework

- development of more flexible approaches to teaching and learning
- promotion of a committed team approach
- rapid response to curriculum change and new initiatives without substantial increase in costs

Operation

Pre-vocational studies

The system was first implemented in Pre-vocational Studies in 1991 after discussions with the Head of Department, the VP Resources and administrative staff. The central idea of the system is *notional contact* and involves monitoring by FEMIS.

In the Pre-vocational Studies Division it was thought that students with learning difficulties and disabilities required extra support and a more generic approach to their learning programmes since these stretched across the college. The nature of the students' disabilities required staff to spend a good deal of time in a pastoral role. The historic FEMIS model of formal classroom delivery was inadequate to capture this work and the notional contact idea, central to caseloading was adopted.

The curriculum areas affected by caseloading are the core areas for the students who have learning difficulties, covering a wide range of educational activities, including tutorials, literacy and numeracy, basic skills, pastoral support and work within the Award Scheme framework.

Although caseloading is not at present linked to new contracts, the changing role of the lecturer and the need for flexible delivery may steer contracts toward caseloading.

Each member of staff in the team has their own total contact hours. Some are on new contracts, some are on old contracts and some are managers on reduced contact time.

Each member of staff will have a different profile of work, some of which will be caseloaded and some of which will be 'normal' timetabled hours. For example:

Staff A		Staff B	
Total contact 23 hours		Total contact 17 hours	
Pre-vocational	8 hours	SLD	10 hours
Learner Services	4 hours	TVEI Link	1 hour
TVEI	1 hour	Caseload for Foundation	6 hours
Caseload for Foundation	10 hours		

Thus a total number of caseloaded hours for Foundation can be calculated by adding up the hours from each member of staff. The caseloaded hours are 'notional' contact hours only and may be used for a variety of functions:

- tutorials
- tracking
- liaison
- teaching

In this instance the management information is calculated as follows:

Total number of staff hours

Number of students = Caseload value

Total number of staff hours = 114

Number of students = 70

$$\text{Caseload} = \frac{114}{70} = 1.62$$

Thus for staff B with a caseload of six hours

$$\frac{6}{1.62} = 3 \text{ students}$$

Trowel trades

This division delivers NVQs, GNVQ units and short courses and is staffed by:

- two management spine staff at 18 hours contact each
- one lecturer at 23 hours contact
- one technician/trainer at 37 hours

Accommodation is in a purpose-built industrial unit with a large open workshop area and some small tutorial rooms.

Staff are notionally timetabled with groups of students for their contact time. However, actual staff activity depends on the needs of individual students, each of whom has their own programme. The unit operates a roll-on roll-off system with occasional key lectures or delivery sessions. All students receive underpinning knowledge via supported self-study material and staff are able to provide tutorial support as required.

The system allows for individual members of staff to be released to undertake development work, produce or edit flexible learning materials and work on new initiatives and programmes.

Business administration GNVQ Foundation/Intermediate

Caseloading is operating on a pilot basis for Business Administration at just one of the college sites. The specific issues being addressed are:

- coping with large/small groups
- differing levels of marking/assessment
- flexible access
- workplace assessment

Staff are tending to spend far more time guiding and counselling than class teaching. The objective for the pilot is to calculate staff time based on student time and outcomes.

The caseload value of 1.14 (teaching) or 1.24 (including tutorials) was arrived at as follows:

Assume one group teaching hour	=	1.5 staff hours, including preparation, delivery, assessment
19 student taught hours per week per group	=	28.5 staff hours
Assume manageable group size	=	25

Then

Caseload	=	$\frac{28.5}{25}$	=	1.14 hours/student/week
If tutorial caseload			=	0.1 hour/student/week
then total caseload			=	1.24 hours/student/week

Effects

Staff attitudes

Within the three caseloaded divisions the schemes are working very well and, as a result, other departments are thinking of adopting the models. In general, staff are in favour of the system as it enables them to operate in a more flexible framework for curriculum delivery and the provision of tutorial and pastoral support. Lecturers have responsibility for their own workloads, enabling them to monitor and support students in situations outside the classroom. This is important for students hoping to progress into vocational and work settings.

Working relationships between staff have improved as a result of caseloading, because it has given staff ownership of their time and supported a team approach to curriculum development and delivery.

There is some recognition that the idea of notional contact is too general and needs to be identified more specifically, so that staff undertaking more teaching than liaison work would have this documented. Some staff dislike a generic approach to tasks and duties, as they want the security of a more specific system to show the hours they have worked.

Effects on the curriculum

Caseloading has allowed programmes to be modularised and delivered in a variety of settings. It also gives opportunities for staff to structure programmes using the hours at their disposal. Caseloading has enhanced the provision of tutorial support and makes it easier to deal with problems arising on the course. Although there is no firm evidence as to whether caseloading has affected students' satisfaction with their programmes, this is likely to have been increased by the enhanced tutorials and personal support. Caseloading enables students to have more access to lecturing staff outside the formal classroom situation and this should enhance their opportunities for progression and achievement.

Chapter 6

Workloading to caseloading — a resource-based approach

Dr Ed Sallis

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Background

Brunel College initially undertook a research exercise to explore alternative ways of organising and accounting for staff time. A workloading scheme was devised, evaluated and abandoned (see Part I Chapter 3, Relative workloading — a formulaic approach). The college then moved on to consider a resource-based approach to caseloading. This approach is based on the philosophy that the people who know best about meeting the needs of students are the people who teach them. In this model, teams of staff determine their own workloads within the resource parameters set by the FEFC funding methodology. It is a 'bottom-up' approach in contrast to the top-down approach of the formulaic workloading model previously explored by the college.

Operation

The approach is simple. In essence it has involved building an income and expenditure model that applies to all teams in the college. There are a variety of ways in which this model could have been engineered. The thinking at Brunel is that each team earns the funding units it derives from the number of students it enrols and teaches on its programmes. The teams earn units at an agreed rate. For 1995-6 the rate was set at £12 a unit. Added to the FEFC income is two thirds of all fee income and all of the income earned by the team. This forms the team's total income. Because it is derived from the FEFC funding methodology, the elements of the model are already familiar, so it is relatively easy to understand and operate. Teams are credited with the income from their activities and have to meet the direct costs of delivery. There is a corporate commitment to reduce central overheads and to allocate a greater proportion of income to front-line delivery.

Each team draws up a business plan, setting out its targets for achievements within this resource envelope. It is then up to the team to decide on the best way to deliver these. The agreement that the teams have with college management is to achieve certain clear output targets that focus on quality, completion and achievement. It is these output targets that senior management are increasingly concerned with, under the system of caseloading, rather than the determination of the inputs to programmes, in the form of staff teaching hours. It is for teams to decide what resources to put into lecturing, projects, tutorials, workshops, resource-based learning, or any other suitable approach. Teams are free to front-load the staff inputs at the beginning of the year, if they feel that this is to the students' benefit. They decide on the workloads of their members and distribute work in ways that meet their curriculum goals, rather than have them determined by an abstract formula. Such an approach allows teams to cope with the features of the modern college curriculum in ways that would not be practicable under the old system based on class contact. This is the truly professional approach to caseloading. It gives the responsibility for the curriculum and students'

learning to the programme team. It heightens accountability in the college by setting clear output targets and demonstrates what can be achieved within a given level of resources.

This model is not without its difficulties, of course. The question of whether the FEFC funding methodology is the appropriate model to use for determining income is one that is often raised. A college could determine its own internal allocation model if it felt that the FEFC model was not meeting its needs. However, this would be a difficult exercise and without considerable cost data, would be no more accurate than the FEFC approach. The important issue is that staff understand exactly how they will be accredited with income.

The other difficult issue is that of cross-subsidies, where a team's historic costs are greater than its income earning potential. There are no difficulties about cross-subsidy, providing that the process is transparent, so that other teams recognise that part of their costs is the subsidy of another area within the college. However, the Brunel approach has been to reduce cross subsidies and for each team to operate within its actual resource envelope. It also needs to be recognised that such an approach to caseloading cannot exist without a sophisticated business planning process and an investment in a suitable budget control system.

Evaluation

At Brunel College, this resource-based approach to caseloading is seen as a means of reducing the historical link between hours and workload. What is being developed is an approach that gives staff the latitude to pursue their professional role. As the curriculum is becoming increasingly student-centred and resource-based, then the process of determining staff workloads needs to reflect this.

The key question to be answered in moving toward a system of caseloading is whether staff empowerment should be a feature of it. The choice between the formulaic and the resource-based approaches reflects

institutional philosophy about who should control workloads and how they should be managed. Caseloading has the potential to change the relationship between staff and college managers. Whereas the formulaic approach is essentially about control and regulation, the more holistic approach of the resource-based model is about allowing staff to determine the best way of achieving curricula goals. At Brunel College, the resource-based approach is seen as opening up tremendous opportunities for innovation. The prize is not only greater institutional flexibility, but also the opportunity for teams of lecturers to determine how to use their scarce resources for the benefit of students. There are potentially enormous gains from this, if caseloading is handled properly and sensitively. The operation of caseloading systems does raise considerable problems and some of the idealism currently associated with it will doubtless be tempered by the realities of its operation. However, such are the benefits, that at Brunel College a resource-based approach to caseloading is seen as an exercise that is well worth pursuing.

Chapter 7

An exploration of caseloading

Pru Taylour

South Bristol College

Background

The experiences of South Bristol College with regard to the development of caseloading are probably very similar to those of other colleges — a lot of thinking and talking about it with limited implementation, in the context of complex staffing, resourcing and curriculum issues. However, the processes we have gone through in trying to formulate a model which will have the widespread commitment of staff, may be of interest to other colleges.

The concept of caseloading has been under discussion at South Bristol since at least 1993. The reasons for this interest centre around:

- the need to achieve greater equity
- changes to the nature of teaching

- the locus of decision making concerning the management of the learning process, e.g. decisions about the balance of learning activities provided
- the need to achieve efficiency savings while making every effort to maintain quality

In March 1994, it was decided to formalise the discussions through the formation of a cross-college working party. This reflected a conscious decision to involve as many people as possible in formulating a caseloading model for the college. A notice was placed in the college's newsletter inviting any member of staff to join the working party. The response was extremely encouraging, indicating considerable interest in the subject.

Unfortunately, the timing of these discussions could hardly have been worse! The FEFC funding methodology was new and everyone was struggling to understand its complexities. To use the funding methodology as the basis for developing the caseloading model added another complication to the discussions. Moreover, the contracts dispute inevitably meant that caseloading was viewed with suspicion. Perhaps it was a management trick to increase workloads by the back door. This view was difficult to counter, since the demands on the sector for increased efficiency meant that workloads had to increase, however these were defined. If constrained by a contract defined in terms of teaching hours, it would be manifest as increased group sizes and reduced student contact time. All caseloading can do in this context is to provide a means of managing the process in a way that might minimise damage.

The first task of the working party was to identify the key principles which should inform the caseloading model adopted by the college. These were articulated as follows:

- that the model should emphasise that teaching is a team activity rather than a solitary one and should allow the team to decide how the curriculum is best delivered

- that the staffing allocation should be directly and explicitly linked to students' learning
- that the SSR, *however defined*, is the most effective way to achieve this...
- ...and that this should therefore be the starting point for the caseload
- that the 'student' element of the SSR should be derived from the FEFC units of activity
- that, as long as the definition of a teacher's workload is in terms of contact time, the 'staffing' element will be constrained in scope and flexibility
- that the allocation of responsibility should be decided as close to the point of delivery as possible, preferably at programme team level, but certainly at divisional level
- thus the caseload should define target outcomes and give freedom to the division (or programme team) to allocate responsibilities in order to achieve these outcomes.

Principles for managing the process were also defined:

- as many people as possible from across the college to be involved in formulating the model
- all staff to be kept informed of progress
- NATFHE also invited to be involved

Operation

The model, as it stands, looks something like this:

- the curriculum teams negotiate the portfolio for the following year and agree target numbers for each programme

- this would be translated into a target number of units of activity, building in assumptions about drop-out and achievement rates
- using the defined staff:units ratio for the college, the number of full-time equivalent staff needed would be calculated. The number of FTE permanent staff is then subtracted, showing how many part-time staff are required
- each curriculum area thus receives a full-time staffing complement, plus a part-time staffing budget (and, of course, a budget for consumables, etc.)

As described so far, the model suggests that caseloading is purely a mechanism for allocating resources. However, there are two other significant elements of the model:

- curriculum managers and their teams have the freedom to decide how to deploy staffing resources to achieve the defined learning outcomes. This creates the potential for thinking much more broadly about those activities which contribute to a student's learning — activities which may be beyond the narrow definition of teaching used by the Silver Book — and for using the strengths of the various individuals in a team. There are, of course, constraints to this decision making. At present, the nature of the contracts for some staff imposes a significant constraint. The effects of servicing and shared use of resources creates another. However, the principle of devolving the decision making as close as possible to the point of delivery is key.
- the 'part-time' teaching budget should create another degree of freedom. It will give teams the opportunity to support the learning process in whatever way they deem appropriate, given the specific needs of their students. This freedom would extend far beyond a flexible deployment of part-time staff. It would encompass, for instance, the freedom to employ other

types of staff (e.g. work placement officers) or to use this budget to buy additional learning resources. Again, the decision lies with the team.

Taking stock

Development has been affected by the fact that discussions about caseloading have inevitably been linked with the contracts dispute. The fact that the model uses FEFC units of activity has meant that understanding of the caseloading model has been linked to the degree of understanding of the FEFC funding methodology and degree of confidence using it. The necessary understanding and confidence are now growing.

There is still a high level of interest in caseloading at the college and people may have unrealistic expectations about what caseloading can achieve.

Caseloading, based on units of activity, is now being used to allocate part-time staffing budgets to divisions with some autonomy over how these resources are used.

So, for South Bristol College, what next? The last two elements of the model described above are still only embryonic. Teams have yet to explore and exploit the full extent of the freedom offered by the model. It is likely that some of the problems raised by this devolution of responsibility have yet to surface. The long lead-in time, while it has been helpful in gaining commitment to the concept of caseloading, may have given people unrealistic expectations — an assumption that a caseloading model will demonstrate that everyone's workload is greater than everyone else's!

The college intends to look at weightings. Because they are using the FEFC's definition of units of activity, the only weighting involved is that deriving from the cost weighting factor. This was never intended to reflect workload, however. Some research into workload formulae is needed.

A further issue for the college is to decide how (and, indeed whether) to reflect differential retention and achievement rates, so that high rates can be rewarded, without further disadvantaging teams with low retention and achievement rates.

South Bristol is continuing to explore the potential of implementing caseloading, with interest, hope and some trepidation!

Part III

Hybrids

Chapter 8

A compensatory time model

Yvonne Griffiths

Northbrook College of Design and Technology

The Northbrook model of caseloading is based on the recognition of responsibility for numbers of students, reflected in reductions to class contact hours. It could be categorised as either workloading or caseloading and therefore represents a hybrid model.

Background

Northbrook College was formed on 1 September 1986 from the West Sussex College of Design, Worthing College of Technology, and Chelsea College of Aeronautical Automobile Engineering. The college is based on nine sites across the south-eastern part of West Sussex. In 1994-5 there were 180 full-time and 229 part-time academic staff, and 77 full-time and 130 part-time support staff. The college was managed through a faculty-based structure by heads of departments, programme and

course leaders, with course delivery managed by course teams. A new divisional management structure was introduced in September 1995.

In 1994-5 the college had an ALF of £16.70. In 1993-4 there was an increase of 12.8% in student FTEs, and in 1994-5 an increase of 17.9%. However, these increases were accompanied by a decrease in real terms of 9.6% and 12.7% respectively in budget allocation. In addition, increased drop-out in 1994-5 has put further pressure on resources.

It was against this background of difficulties in recruitment and funding that caseloading was introduced in September 1994 in the hope that it would have a positive effect on recruitment, retention rates, entries for qualifications, drop out and achievement rates. Efficiency gains were also expected.

The college has a broad curriculum portfolio. In addition to a wide range of academic and vocational FE provision, approximately 20% of the college's work is at HE level. This sector of the college's work is particularly addressed by the caseloading scheme. The college is also the local provider for adult education.

At the time when the caseloading model was evaluated, five heads of department had caseloaded programme leaders in their departments. The Art & Design areas had the highest number of caseloaded staff (nine), Management & Information Studies and Technology one each, Health Hospitality & Leisure had two and Aero & Auto Engineering, three. There were none in Business Studies.

College aims for caseloading

In common with other FE institutions, Northbrook has been under pressure to change its approach to the management of teaching and learning because of curriculum developments such as NVQs and the new funding methodology introduced at incorporation. The demand now is for a flexible, responsive college, able to meet the need for greater efficiency and to manage the shift from teacher-centred to student-

centred learning through the provision of flexible learning opportunities. It is also Northbrook policy to:

- work toward the elimination of the distinction between academic and support staff
- expand HE provision alongside mainstream FE courses
- move all staff on to new contracts

Given the national and local situation, the introduction of a caseloading system seemed both necessary and propitious.

The caseloading model

The Northbrook caseloading model applies only to staff on new contracts. It is based on the recognition of specific responsibilities of academic staff in relation to specific numbers of students. This recognition takes the form of hours of 'compensatory time' deducted from the 25 hours of weekly teaching (over 36 weeks a year) that are required under the new contracts, during a college year of 42 weeks, with 37 working hours per week.

Role	Compensatory time
Programme leader	7 hrs per week
Course leader	2 hrs per week for 30+ FTEs or 3 hrs per week for 60 FTEs
Personal tutors	1 hr per week per group of 15 students or 2 hrs weekly for 30 students

In addition to the compensatory time available for course administration, lecturers teaching on HE programmes (defined as those funded by HEFC or attracting mandatory grants for students) are entitled to five hours per week compensatory time over a teaching year of 30 weeks rather than 36. This is intended to enable them to do research relating to their programme.

For example, the maximum number of compensatory hours available to a programme leader who is also a course leader, personal tutor to two groups, and undertaking research would be:

Programme leader	7 hrs
Course leader	3 hrs
Personal tutor	2 hrs
HE research	5 hrs
	17 hrs

This would leave eight hours a week of teaching.

It has been the practice over several years to delegate significant budgets to course teams; more recently, it was intended to delegate payroll budgets in their entirety to departments. This intention has been imperfectly realised, however, since only the hours have been delegated; staffing costs continue to be met centrally. Caseloading was intended to support the empowerment process implicit in the delegation of budgets, as well as to help implement the college's overall aims. These are:

- to improve the quality of the students' learning experiences and outcomes
- to ensure better management of resources
- to increase staff motivation by encouraging them to develop the managerial skills necessary for promotion

Operation

Caseloading at Northbrook is based on the concept of recognition of responsibility for numbers of students, measured by reductions in class contact hours from a maximum of 25 hours per week. It is designed to facilitate the transition to new contracts and is theoretically applied to all staff who have signed either the new management spine contract or the professional academic contract. In 1994-5, 40-60 staff including all heads of departments had signed. They represented all salary grades and almost all curriculum areas — art and design, performing arts,

technology, aeronautical and automobile engineering, health hospitality and leisure, management and professional studies, and all levels from GNVQ Foundation to BA Honours degrees.

Staff who are caseloaded were, in effect, self-selected through their willingness to sign new contracts. They were not chosen by the college to take part in a controlled experiment in caseloading. As a result, there is an uneven distribution of caseloaded staff across roles and across areas of the curriculum.

This means that it is not possible to make precise comparisons and judgements about the effects of caseloading on different groups of staff, although it is possible to gain a number of useful insights into the model.

Heads of departments may be said to be caseloaded in that their area of work is measured in student numbers and each is expected to be responsible for 500+ FTEs. However the size of departments in FTEs varies considerably from the 500+ norm, all but two being below it. The post of programme leader has recently been created to redress the balance and to provide section leader support for heads of department. The appointment of programme leaders depended on the willingness of suitable staff to sign the new management spine contract. As a result, some departments are much better served with programme leaders than others. The workload of the programme leaders, though nominally related to the responsibility for 125+ FTEs, is similarly disproportionate, for in practice the numbers vary widely, from as few as 40 to as many as 287.

Programme leaders have been recruited mainly from among former senior lecturers with significant curriculum, administrative and managerial responsibilities, whose teaching hours were fixed at either 17 or 18 hours per week. Under the terms of their new contracts, programme leaders are entitled to seven hours compensatory time for course management. Also available to them, as part of the management guidelines, are one to three hours if they are also course leaders, one to two hours if they are personal tutors and 20% or five hours a week, if they teach on HE courses. The contract is subject to review after one year and compensatory time may be removed if student numbers are not maintained.

In practice, some programme leaders are not course leaders or personal tutors, nor do they teach on HE courses. They are entitled only to seven hours per week 'compensatory time'. They may choose to take on extra teaching hours as overtime, either as temporary cover for absent colleagues, or permanently, instead of other duties they find less appealing than teaching.

Staff involved in this analysis of caseloading are programme leaders on the management spine. The effect of caseloading on programme leaders has been to widen their span of control, thereby increasing their administrative load, at the same time as reducing their teaching hours. Again, the actual numbers show considerable disparity; teaching commitments vary from seven hours per week over 30 weeks, to 18 hours per week over 36 weeks, depending on whether the courses are FE or HE, or a mixture. Caseloading has had the most noticeable effect on programme leaders, often significantly altering their patterns of work. For this reason, the experience of programme leaders was the focus of Northbrook's investigation into the effects of caseloading.

Staff who signed the Professional Academic Contract (former L1s or L11s, those on temporary contracts seeking permanent employment and new appointees) are caseloaded only to the extent that they may receive between one and three hours per week for being course leaders or personal tutors. However, these hours were available before the caseloading model was introduced.

Profile of responsibilities of caseloaded programme leaders:

- Accompanying students on trips abroad
- Allocating and managing departmental budgets
- Appraisal of section staff
- Arranging sponsorship
- Arranging student visits to exhibitions, fairs, industry
- Bidding for European funding
- Consultancy work

- Developing HE course
- Internal assessment
- Interviewing prospective students
- Liaison with external moderators/verifiers
- Liaison with employers/schools/industry/universities/ careers service/hospitals
- Marketing
- Membership of internal committees
- Membership of external professional bodies
- NVQ verification/co-ordination/internal/moderation/ assessment
- Organising and chairing meetings with section staff, course leaders and others
- Organising cover for sickness
- Organising careers fairs
- Organising short courses
- Recruitment/parents' evenings
- Research/higher degree study
- Teaching
- Timetabling
- UCAS co-ordination
- Visiting students on work experience
- Writing materials for use in flexible learning areas/revising course materials
- Writing contracts
- Writing NVQ materials

Effects of caseloading

An investigation into the effects of caseloading was carried out through structured interviews with six out of the seven heads of department, and the 15 programme leaders who were in post in November 1994. A second round of interviews with selected heads of departments and programme leaders (including two appointed in February 1995) was conducted in June 1995.

Although caseloading has most directly affected programme leaders, it has also impinged on the work of their line managers, the heads of department who delegate work to programme leaders.

Curriculum

Design and structure of courses

Changes in course design and structure have occurred because of curriculum and funding demands. However, course design has both affected and been affected by the caseloading system. Programme leaders have been expected to structure courses to comply with the decision to reduce course hours and to compensate for this loss of teaching hours by developing flexible learning areas. In many cases, the appointment of programme leaders with fewer teaching hours has required courses to be restructured and more part-time staff to be brought in.

It could be argued that the provision of 'compensatory time' for programme leaders has resulted in an increase to their overall workload. Time that should be devoted to planning and developing courses can be 'usurped by the imposition' of more administrative work passed down by the heads of department, and by problems passed upwards by course leaders who turn first to the programme leader for advice and support. In cases of staff absence, the programme leader is frequently the member of staff with the least number of committed hours and therefore the only person available to provide cover.

Management of courses

Heads of department have found caseloading advantageous because it allows them to delegate responsibility for sections of the department and routine administrative work. This sets them free to develop new areas and to engage in strategic planning. They recognise that programme leaders are required to work harder, however, and concede that many of them are overloaded. For themselves, there is the advantage of being able to delegate responsibility for a section of departmental work. They feel that without caseloading this work would not be done. They think it is right that administrative duties should be recognised in terms of compensatory time.

Programme leaders, almost without exception, reported an increase in their workload. They felt that the reduction in class contact hours did not sufficiently compensate for this increase.

Caseloading should lead to increased flexibility in time management, but most respondents — nine — thought that the demands of administrative duties and meetings had reduced their flexibility; only four believed that their flexibility had increased and two were not sure.

Tutorial support

In theory, caseloading gives programme leaders greater flexibility to manage their time; it should enable them to deal with problems and respond to students' needs as they arise. In practice, most programme leaders did not think this objective had been met, as administrative tasks have more than filled the time not spent on teaching. Three programme leaders found that other demands had encroached on the time freed from teaching, to the point where they were unable to intervene until a problem had become an emergency.

Staff satisfaction and motivation

Caseloading was the main reason for signing the new contract for over half the programme leaders. Their view was that as former senior

lecturers or LIIs, they were already working extra hours so it was in their interests to sign and gain the financial benefits.

Reasons for signing the new contract were reflected in people's expectations of caseloading . Nine respondents had low expectations: they thought that either there would be little change, or that their working conditions would deteriorate. Two hoped that caseloading would give them greater flexibility in managing their time and enable them to be more competent. Two thought that the system was advantageous, in that it allowed more part-time staff with specialist expertise to be brought in.

Those who had expected little from caseloading were not disappointed. Increased delegation of paperwork from heads of departments, without any perceived recognition of the time required for it, combined with the repetitive nature of much of the administrative work, made the programme leader's job time-consuming, without being productive or satisfying. Frustration was expressed at paperwork taking up time that should be spent with students or on the promotion and development of courses.

Eleven of the respondents thought that the way in which caseloading is organised is arbitrary and unfair. The distribution of FTEs results in extremely unbalanced workloads which compensatory time does nothing to redress. Part-time groups can be very large, yet attract little compensatory time, while small groups of full-time students may be on courses with between eight and ten different subjects, which is demanding in management time. Staff teaching on HE courses are awarded five hours per week for research. Some respondents commented on the need for a system to ensure that the research is done, and to monitor and evaluate it.

Although the basic idea of caseloading was thought to be fair, its implementation was perceived to be mechanistic and inflexible and to result in inequalities. As a result, 13 out of 17 of the programme leaders were dissatisfied. However all agreed that although operating

unsatisfactorily, the caseloading system is absolutely necessary; without it, the work could not be done.

Personal relationships had been affected by caseloading. Over half the respondents reported an improved relationship with the head of department, with more clearly defined individual roles, better communication and more involvement in decision making. More meetings were necessary, but they were more focused and more efficient. However, there was resentment among some programme leaders at the perceived increase in their workloads and the impression that heads of department used caseloading as an excuse to delegate more work, without considering the time it would take. Programme leaders were also under increased pressure from course leaders and other non-caseloaded colleagues, who turned first to the programme leader for help and advice, and passed work up, on the basis of the compensatory time the the programme leader enjoyed.

All respondents thought that, properly organised, a caseloading system could offer important advantages which would increase staff satisfaction and motivation. Such a system could offer greater autonomy and flexibility in time management, the opportunity to have an overview of a particular curriculum area and to play a leading role in shaping it to the advantage of students and the institution. There was a general feeling of frustration that caseloading had been used to overload staff with unproductive administrative tasks. Some expressed regret that compensatory time is not contractual and can be varied for reasons outside the programme leaders' control. There was a sense among both programme leaders and heads of department that many of the opportunities and benefits of caseloading had been lost.

There was criticism that caseloading had been applied without job evaluation or assessment of current workload. The resulting inequities have not been addressed; no account is taken of uneven workloads resulting from numbers of students, their modes of attendance, the levels and complexities of courses, assessment requirements or the demands of validating bodies. Caseloading is insensitive to particular

circumstances and can penalise staff when numbers drop for reasons outside their control. It does not acknowledge the diversity of lecturers' responsibilities, such as health and safety and site management, committee membership and the co-ordination of work experience. However, in so far as it was intended to provide heads of department with more support at middle management level, caseloading may be regarded as a success.

Costs and efficiency

Heads of department, almost without exception, were concerned at the costs of the caseloading system, particularly if these had to be borne by departments rather than centrally. The immediate costs were in replacing hours lost to caseloading by employing part timers. Although time spent on activities other than teaching might result in greater efficiency, it was difficult to compare these activities in terms of costs, with those of employing extra part-timers. In general, heads of departments thought that the caseloading system would cost more than if the same staff were not caseloaded. On the other hand, without caseloading some work would either not get done or be done on the basis of goodwill. As a consequence, heads of department thought it was right that the work of programme leaders should be recognised and rewarded.

Over half the programme leaders took the view that caseloading did, or could, result in increased efficiency in course management. Five did not think caseloading had increased efficiency: it did not allow enough time to cover the duties required; it was not contractual; and it was not fair, because it was not based on job evaluation or recognition of individual workloads. They thought it had forced people to work much harder.

Advice to other colleges

Caseloading is an opportunity to free staff to play to their strengths and to concentrate on those areas of their work that they find most satisfying.

This might be marketing, curriculum development, research, organising work experience or establishing relationships with industry or other outside bodies. A caseloading approach needs to take account of all the duties performed by lecturers and allow flexibility so that they may choose to do more of what they do best. The dangers are that caseloading may result in more work being done without increasing productivity and that the opportunity for taking a fresh look at lecturers' roles and workloads may be missed.

A prerequisite for a caseloading system based on FTEs and compensatory time for individuals rather than course teams, is job evaluation and audit, including responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom. A reasonable workload could then be allocated, precisely targeted at specific outcomes, equitable in relation to other staff and flexible enough to take account of changing circumstances, such as a fall in numbers or the merging of groups. Job descriptions would need to be individual rather than generic, to avoid a situation in which one person is assumed to have unlimited responsibility. To be seen to be fair, job descriptions need to be in the public domain, with roles and duties clearly defined and demarcated.

The association of caseloading with new contracts has not been helpful as it has limited the scope for implementation. If the real aim is to cut costs, then such association may be inevitable, but if the aim is to increase efficiency, improve curriculum delivery and motivate staff, then perhaps the system should be applied to staff regardless of their contract status.

Chapter 9

The professional portfolio

Ivor Hixon

Blackpool and the Fylde College

Background

Blackpool and The Fylde College is a large college providing a wide range of post-compulsory education and HE courses for some 4,000 full-time and 17,000 part-time students. There are approximately 340 lecturing staff, supported by technicians and administrators.

The college has four main campuses over an area stretching from Fleetwood in the north to Lytham St. Annes in the south. The college is divided into five schools, each of which has between 50 and 90 staff. Each school has a mixture of further and higher education.

The Professional Portfolio system has been developed in the School of Management, Hospitality & Food Studies which has an approximately equal mix of further and higher education.

The scheme is operating with all lecturing staff in the school, following a pilot with ten members of staff for a term in 1994-5. The philosophy behind the scheme emphasises that staff are *professionals*. The Professional Portfolio scheme is based on the premise that professionals have a key role to play with their clients and that, in a professional/client relationship, counting hours is not appropriate. The Silver Book allocation of 70% teaching hours to 30% of other associated duties does not reflect this philosophy. Moreover, the changes that have occurred in the organisation and management of student learning have meant that the distinctions between teaching and other activities associated with learning, have become blurred. This means that the class-contact hour is no longer an accurate measure of a lecturer's workload. The aim of the system aim is to empower lecturers to manage their own work, instead of relying on a manager to dictate the number of hours it takes a student to achieve their learning, or the best method of achieving it.

In order to establish an equitable system for establishing client-partnership relationships with students, the School SMT looked at a range of alternatives. These included:

- a college-wide system — which would not easily be able to accommodate HE
- an FEFC funding model
- restructuring
- a School-devised model which took account of the diversity of programmes

A system was needed which:

- was relatively simple to understand
- shifted emphasis away from the narrow requirements of contact hours, to one based on student learning and achievement

- could be universal across a diverse range of programmes and learning
- reflected efficiency measures
- offered real economies
- was commensurate with students' expectations
- did not impair or compromise quality of provision

The model would also need to accommodate all the competing demands on School resources.

It was felt that staff would be better able to manage their own resources in a professional/client relationship, if they were fully aware of the funding context and committed to achieving specified FEFC units. This would need to be combined with the authority and power to manage students' learning. Managers would then become providers of resources and support their staff by acting as mentors and/or coaches.

At the same time, there was a need for staff to develop sufficient FEFC units of resource to justify their salaries and contribute to covering overheads.

The portfolio is based on FEFC units like the caseloading system at Accrington and Rossendale College. The main difference in philosophy from the Accrington and Rossendale system is in relation to teams. At Blackpool and The Fylde College, the professional portfolio is the responsibility of the *individual lecturer*. The Head of School emphasises that although team work is important in the way the School operates, the individual lecturer must accept responsibility for the management of learning. Lecturers must put together their own portfolios and request the physical resources they require and the periods of time they require them for.

The system at Blackpool does not involve the delegation of budgets. Consumables are allocated at School level. The devolving of part-time staffing budgets, which is central to the Accrington model, would not be feasible in the School of Management, Hospitality & Food Studies at

Blackpool and The Fylde, since it has a large full-time staffing establishment and uses few, if any, part-time hours.

Some of the ten staff who piloted the system were on CEF contracts and some were on Silver Book. The type of contract staff were on was not an issue. The professional portfolio can be used with staff on either contract.

The key roles of lecturing staff were defined as:

- managing and facilitating the students' learning programmes, including all guided learning hours
- assisting students to achieve their primary learning goals
- participating in all associated programme team meetings, quality reviews and improvement initiatives
- maintaining associated records in line with college and awarding bodies' requirements
- assisting with recruitment and initial counselling to encourage retention and participation
- participating in project teams for curriculum, promotional or other development activities in the interests of the School
- conducting appropriate research, scholarly activity and higher professional activities, for the development of both the School and the individual and to support the curriculum process

Every programme is managed by a programme manager and team. Field leaders are responsible for subject specialisms

Operation

The work portfolio for lecturers can be determined by using funding guidelines, based essentially upon FEFC calculations for recurrent funding, and adjusted to take account of HE demands. The FEFC guidelines contain a series of key definitions which can be used as a basis for calculating work loads, e.g. primary learning goal; guided learning hours.

Units of resource

The number of FEFC units required to generate the School's staffing budget is calculated. The total budget allocation to the School is sub-divided and distributed in the form of a 'budget' to each member of staff. Clearly, the calculation also needs to take account of College Central Services and School consumables, technician support, etc. The FEFC units of resource are currently valued at approximately £11.50, taking account of these other costs. The following calculations show how an individual's caseload is determined. They allow a rational 'backward pricing' mechanism to establish the School Unit of Resource (SUR) value of a lecturer's work.

The model for FE provision

Assumptions:

- SSR targets of 20:1 which, when taking account of other duties like administration, etc. requires an average class size of 22:1
- full-time students, in pursuing their primary learning goal, will generate 84 'On Programme' FEFC units per year, plus Entry units and Achievement units for successful completion
- full-time students will, in addition, normally generate ten FEFC units via additional study units

Therefore, a full-time student, will generate between 100 and 104 FEFC units per annum.

The School's previous accounting model worked on the following assumptions:

- student contact of approximately 19 hours
- teaching contact of 21 hours
- therefore a 'total teaching load ratio' of 21/19= 1.1 to 1

A portfolio for managed learning and achievement will be 100 FEFC units x 22 (SSR) x 1.1 giving a portfolio unit of 2,400 SURs per annum.

This approach takes account of differing models of learning, without the necessity of counting hours or attempting to weight various differentials. Account is taken of practical work, however, where student/staff ratios are restricted on grounds of space, safety, etc. (see next page).

HE provision

HNDs

Assumptions

- a student achieves ten subject units per annum (including Common Skills) + tutorials. Therefore:

  $$\frac{\text{100 FEFC units per student}}{\text{10 HND Units}} = \text{10 SURs weighting per unit}$$

- the average SSR is 20:1 adjusted to an average class size of 22:1 (to include administrative activities)
- formal typical contact hours per student = 17
- the average teaching hours of between 17 and 21 (therefore an average of 19), give a teaching ratio of 19/17 = 1.1 per student

Ten units per student x weighting of ten SURs x 22 students x 1.1 approximately = 2,400 units per annum.

Similar formulae have also been developed for degree programmes and other academic activities, including:

Tutorial and programme management:

- Academic and pastoral tutorials
  - full-time — five SURs per student per annum
  - part-time — three SURs per student per annum
- Programme management
  - full-time — two SURs per student per annum
  - part-time — one unit per student per annum

Weightings:

- placement weightings — all units valued at 0.25 SURs
- Bakery & Kitchen Production — SURs will be weighted by 1.3

Curriculum development, consultancy:

- negotiated individually and published in *School News* until a pattern is established.

Research:

- normally 250 SURs per agreed published paper or research project

Staff development:

- long courses — 250 SURs per annum for staff undergoing final year of taught Masters, undergraduate or Honours research degrees
- other programmes by negotiation until pattern evolves

The general approach for both FE and HE provision is to evolve the system, as necessary, allocating units for activities and publishing these allocations in *School News* as they emerge. The aim is to ensure that the system is transparent and to demonstrate that there are no 'private deals' for individuals.

Learning support

Part-time students purchase, or are allocated, an annual number of learning support units. These can be taken up in a number of ways — work-based learning and assessment verified by the college; class-contact time and tutorial; access to open learning and support; assessment and verification.

Where members of staff are not involved in the total learning and assessment process, adjustments are made to the FE units by means of

negotiation. Precedents will be established as the year progresses and published in *School News*.

Units are counted at the time of the tri-annual returns to the FEFC. Staff receive 90% SURs for students who complete each stage and the remaining 10% on successful completion by students. Teachers are responsible for their student on-programme and outcome units. Where responsibility is shared, all members of the lecturing team are equally responsible for the units. Where students leave the programme, staff are expected to take action to seek new students in order to maintain the target number of units. If a lecturer or team achieves more than their target units at the end of the academic year, a bonus will be paid at the FEFC marginal unit rate, provided that targets have been met across the school. There is therefore considerable peer pressure for every lecturer to achieve their target as a minimum. It is not in a team's interests to allow its members to underperform.

If a lecturer does not achieve their target units, the reasons for it will be considered. It may have been due to circumstances beyond the individual's control. The performance of lecturers in achieving their target units will form part of the appraisal process.

The Professional Portfolio allows staff to manage learning in a way best suited to the needs of the students and themselves, without the rigid constraints of staff time-tables. Instead of managers drawing up staff timetables, individual lecturers and teams decide how to deploy the units at their disposal. Student timetables remain as a guide for the purposes of structuring guided learning and for planning the use of accommodation in most instances.

The Professional Portfolio model provides a basis for annual review and appraisal, since it highlights key information on the achievement of on-programme and achievement units against targets. Future developments may focus on the allocation of resources to teams.

Table 9.1 provides a hypothetical example of a professional portfolio for one triennial period.

Table 9.1. Hypothetical professional portfolio

Lecturer's name: **Period:** July to December 1995

Programme	Unit value	Student number started	Student number completed	Variance	Unit TOTAL	Unit Variance	Physical resource allocation	Room no.	Output Units to date
GNVQ 3 Manufacture	14	20	19	1*	266	-14	Tuesday, all day	C15	
NVQ II Hotel and Catering	20	10	10		200		Wednesday, all day & Thursday	062	
NVQ III Hotel and Catering	10	20	21	+1	210		Fridays 2.00-6.00pm	315	
MCI 5	10	1	1		10	+10			
TOTALS	54	61	61		686	-4			

Target on-programme units	686	Output units
Actual programme units	682	to date
Variance	-4	

Explanation: * One student transferred to NVQ Ballet & Dance

Professional portfolios for staff on Silver Book contracts

The basis of the old model for timetabling has traditionally been that teaching contact time represents 70% of a lecturer's timetable. The introduction of the professional contract removes the distinction between teaching/learning and preparation times.

There is a wide variety of teaching and learning activities in the School of Management, Hospitality & Food Studies. It was therefore important to ensure that these differences are reflected in the allocation of time for the management of learning.

For those on teaching contracts, the basic time requirement is 37 hours per week, but with the Professional Portfolio only 30 of these hours are directly linked to learning activities. There will be an annual portfolio of hours rather than a longer weekly total and this will accommodate the fluctuation of work loads over the year.

Portfolios comprise two elements:

1 **indirect management of learning**

Programme managers and year tutors:

- up to 33 students — one hour per week
- up to 66 students — two hours per week
- up to 98 students — three hours per week
- 100 students or more — four hours per week and a further hour for each additional 50

Group tutors:

- one hour per week

2 **contact/direct learning time**

Takes into account the number and level of students, and the nature of the learning activity.

For example:

- practical activities (Restaurant and Production Sessions) 1:0

  Where students manage much of their own learning and where teachers do not need to be present the whole time, the learning ratio is 1:0, i.e. the whole 30 hours is deemed to be directly involved in the management of learning (contact).

- key lectures, final year honours 1:1

  For the delivery of key lectures for undergraduates, where learning time is less than 10 hours per week, the ratio is 1:1, i.e. equivalent to 15 hours per week contact, for a teacher who is exclusively occupied in this activity. In addition to presenting key lectures, teachers will be expected to produce an agreed number of articles for publication or carry out research projects or other similar activities.

  Ratios for contact time include an element for preparation and marking, e.g. a ratio of 1.5:1 means that each 1.5 hours contact carries with it one hour for preparation and marking.

  Recognition, in the form of remission from contact, is given for other managerial or support activities, such as recruitment or the management of practical areas.

The reality for any one member of staff is a mixed portfolio of activities. Such an annual portfolio will be a mix of contact + prep/marking time, averaging out to the equivalent of 30 hours per week. The remaining seven hours for new contract holders would be for self development, reading, routine administration. This will also provide a safety net for short-term cover for colleagues.

For example:

J Smith

Activity	Contact	Prep/ Development/ Marking	Total
I. Final year degree	2	2	4
II. FE classroom	10	5	15
III. FE/HE practical	1[illegible]	—	11

Total of 30 hours

Effects of workloading

Effects on the delivery of the curriculum

The Professional Portfolio system enables staff to determine the parameters for curriculum delivery (e.g. course hours). However, changes to patterns of delivery have been cautious during the transitionary period. Now that it is up to teachers and teams to decide how to deploy the hours generated by 2,400 SURs per person, course hours are no longer prescribed by managers. Among the School's FE staff there has therefore been some careful thinking about the number of hours required for teaching and other activities, to enable students to achieve the target qualification and successful progression.

For example, staff are finding new ways of exploiting the flexibility of NVQs and realistic work environments for their students. Moreover, there is now an incentive for staff to offer students the opportunity to take additional certificated studies, since this will enable teams to earn more units.

Teams delivering higher education have reviewed the allocation of responsibility for aspects of delivery in the light of their individual strengths and specialisms.

During the transitionary period, while systems based on counting hours as well as the school units of resource are operating, some staff are clearly anxious that the college may revert to an hours-based system. As a consequence, as a form of personal security, they are concerned to ensure that they have high hours.

Staff attitudes and motivation

The suggestion to move from hours to units of resource was originally proposed by the Head of School, and followed up with a series of seminars and negotiations with staff. Ten people had already piloted the system in 1994-5. Worked examples were discussed at faculty meetings,and there were opportunities to question those who had been involved in the pilot. Teachers of practical subjects were quick to grasp the possibilities. HE staff were more cautious, until they were able to explore the model in detail. As a result of these negotiations, it was decided to pilot the system for one term with all staff in the School.

As the system has evolved, some staff have declared that they are not committed to SURs and that this Professional Portfolio system therefore has nothing to do with them. As a School, however, other members of staff have been anxious to remind them that there are advantages to the professional portfolio system compared with that of counting hours, not least the fact that staff in other Schools could be asked to teach 24 hours per week.

Change of this sort is frightening for many members of staff, who had previously been comfortable with direct learning time without obvious personal accountability for retaining students. The Professional Portfolio system makes an overt link between the work of individual members of staff, the retention and achievement of students and the state of the college budget. The three triannial accounting periods enable the commitment and achievement of staff to be counted. Some staff feel insecure about the system and worry if they feel that they may not be 'up to hours'.

The Professional Portfolio system brings a change of role for managers and some loss of control. In this system their role is to support and guide staff in their professional role, rather than to determine what and how things are to be done.

Effects on productivity and efficiency

As a result of introducing this scheme, it has become clear that some sections of the School are over-staffed. A number people have now left or taken early retirement and this trimming has resulted in efficiency gains, measurable through the caseloading system.

Update on progress

The first tri-annual period has been completed (1 August-31 December 1995) and about 25 members of staff have had their portfolios calculated for this period. Most appear to be on target with approximately 100 units spare. Five people are well above target and this seems to have been achieved by establishing partnership agreements with other organisations and devolving the delivery of the on-the-job element of training and assessment to their partners. One or two members of staff have not quite achieved their targets. The reasons for this have been discussed and in one case the target has been reduced because of the nature of the work. The others aim to achieve their targets by the end of the year.

The general staff view seems to be that they are comfortable with the evolving arrangements and feel happier that they are now able to manage their own time to achieve their education objectives.

Chapter 10

The Danish family system

Torben Jessen

Aabenraa Business College

A system for allocating staff time, known as the family system, is being developed and implemented in a number of business colleges in Denmark. These colleges cater mainly for the 16-19 age group and provide vocational training in business-related subjects leading to work or HE.

Background

To appreciate how radical the family system is, it is necessary to have some understanding of the conventional system of measuring staff time in Danish colleges. Lecturers in Danish colleges work a standard number of hours in a year, i.e. 52 weeks x 37 hours, minus holidays, leaving an annual workload of 1,680 hours. This is a national standard used both inside and outside education. The working hours are calculated by adding up everything a lecturer does under a series of headings which include class contact, marking and preparation and staff

development. Lecturers are allowed 100 hours per year for conferences and meetings. For each lesson they are allowed 45 minutes teaching, 10 minutes break and from 45 to 85 minutes preparation, depending on the level of education. Marking is added up separately, according to the actual number of assignments marked. Allowances may be made for large classes or other circumstances which may increase the workload. On average a teacher will teach four or five 45-minute lessons per day, depending on the subject and level.

The system is very complex and time consuming as it is negotiated and administered at college level, with national recommendations only, to fall back on.

The family system

The aim of the family system is to empower teams to make their own decisions about timetabling and modes of study, according to the needs of their students. The system aims to encourage a greater degree of involvement from staff. Within the parameters set and with the help of the Head of the Family, teams are free to organise the timetables of students and staff as they consider appropriate. The teams are increasingly being empowered to handle as much decision making as possible, as close to their students as possible. The teams will eventually have their own budgets.

At Aabenraa Business College, there are three families, each named after a theme which pervades all the activities in that family, i.e. service management, entrepreneurship and internationalisation. An ideal family consists of 130 students (four groups and six full-time equivalent teachers). Families have classrooms and staff rooms located in the same area of the college to facilitate communication between members of the staff team and between staff and students. Because the team of staff are responsible for their students' whole curriculum, they need to have a broad range of knowledge and skills.

The system has been piloted at Aabenraa Business College for the past four years. Research has shown that examination results are the same under this system. However the research also shows that the students who have been involved in the family system have developed more 'soft' skills, such as group and communication skills. This would appear to be a result of working with the same small group of staff for an extended period.

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